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SCENES FROM A REVOLUTION:
DISPATCHES FROM THE
MIDDLE EAST

THE INTERVIEW
BARNEY FRANK

20Q
ED HELMS

2011 BASEBALL PREVIEW WITH THE FREAK
TIM LINCECUM

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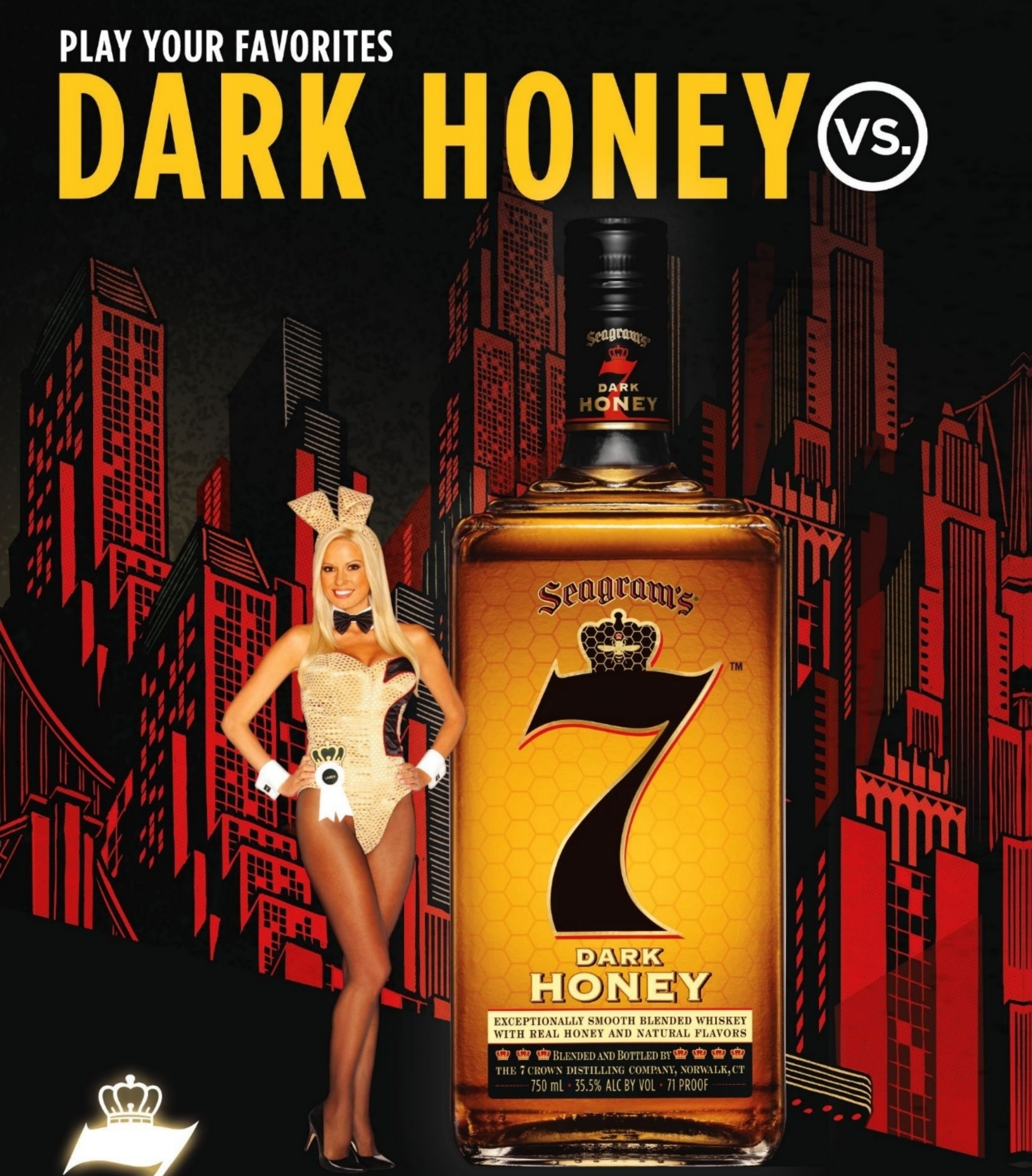

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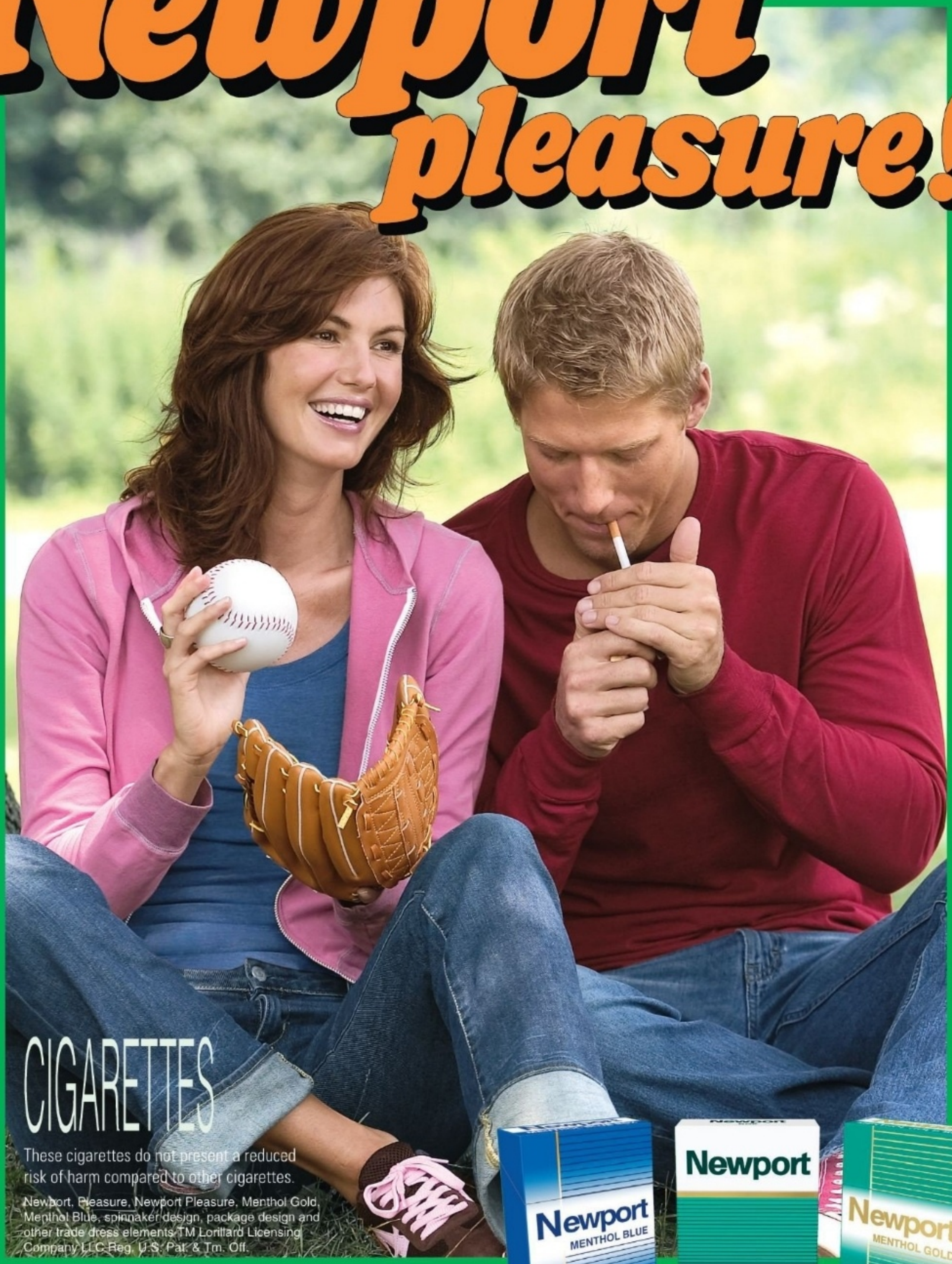

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PLAYBILL

Five years ago housing prices peaked; the collective value of American homes has since fallen by $9 trillion. You got out in time, right? Probably not, which is why **Barney Frank,** the outspoken Democratic congressman from Massachusetts, plans to run for a 17th term—he wants to prevent Republicans from dismantling regulations he championed that he says will prevent another meltdown. It's unusual to return to a politician for a second *Playboy Interview* (his first was in 1999), because they usually aren't around too long. How does Frank feel about his party losing control of the House? As a "left-handed gay Jew," he says he's accustomed to being outnumbered. The majority has spoken loud and clear in Cairo, and our correspondent **Shashank Bengali** was there. In *Scenes From a Revolution* he reports from Tahrir Square on the dangerous days of rebellion. Youthful movements are of great interest to **Karina Smirnoff,** the ballroom champ featured on *Dancing With the Stars*, who shares her own in a pulsating pictorial. Twenty-four centuries ago Socrates proved to be nimble on his feet but needed a partner to step it up. In *Socrates's Publicist*, comedian **Demetri Martin** imagines the philosopher with a media-savvy advocate named Jackie. It's from Martin's new *This Is a Book*. Another funnyman, **Ed Helms,** reveals in *20Q* his concerns about errant wood during a *Cedar Rapids* sex scene with Sigourney Weaver and the tattoo he had on his face for *The Hangover Part II*. To complete the comedy trifecta, **Jonathan Lethem,** fiction writer, cultural critic and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for his novel *Motherless Brooklyn*, recalls in *Kovacs's Gift* the innovative television work of Ernie Kovacs, much of which has tragically been lost. Thankfully, *Barbarella*, the Hollywood sci-fi camp classic about a world that has banished violence and sexual inhibition, was preserved and is now in talks for a remake. In *Lust in Space*, *New York Times* film critic **A.O. Scott** looks at what his newspaper once called "a special kind of mess." That may well also describe romantic love, and in *Carcassonne*, three-time Booker Prize nominee **Julian Barnes** speculates on what makes it work, from the guerrilla Garibaldi carrying off Anita Riberas to gay couples who seem to be the only ones still taking joyful interest in each other—perhaps because in many places their love is illegal. It's an exclusive selection from *Pulse: Stories by Julian Barnes*, out this month.

Barney Frank

Shashank Bengali

Demetri Martin

Karina Smirnoff

Jonathan Lethem

Ed Helms

A.O. Scott

Julian Barnes

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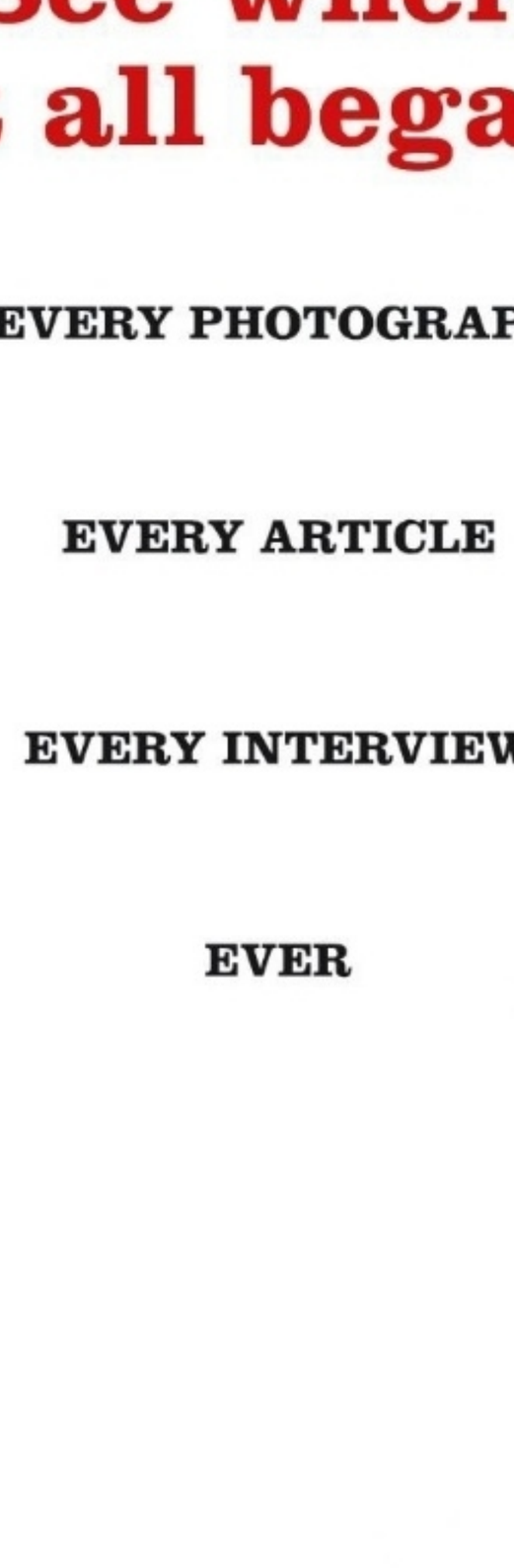

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FIRST COVER PHOTO
OCTOBER 1989

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Karina Smirnoff is a six-time U.S. ballroom-dancing champion and the hottest pro on *Dancing With the Stars.* The talented beauty bares every inch of her fit physique for photographer Stephen Wayda. Our Rabbit hung around during the shoot and gave Karina bunny ears when she wasn't looking.

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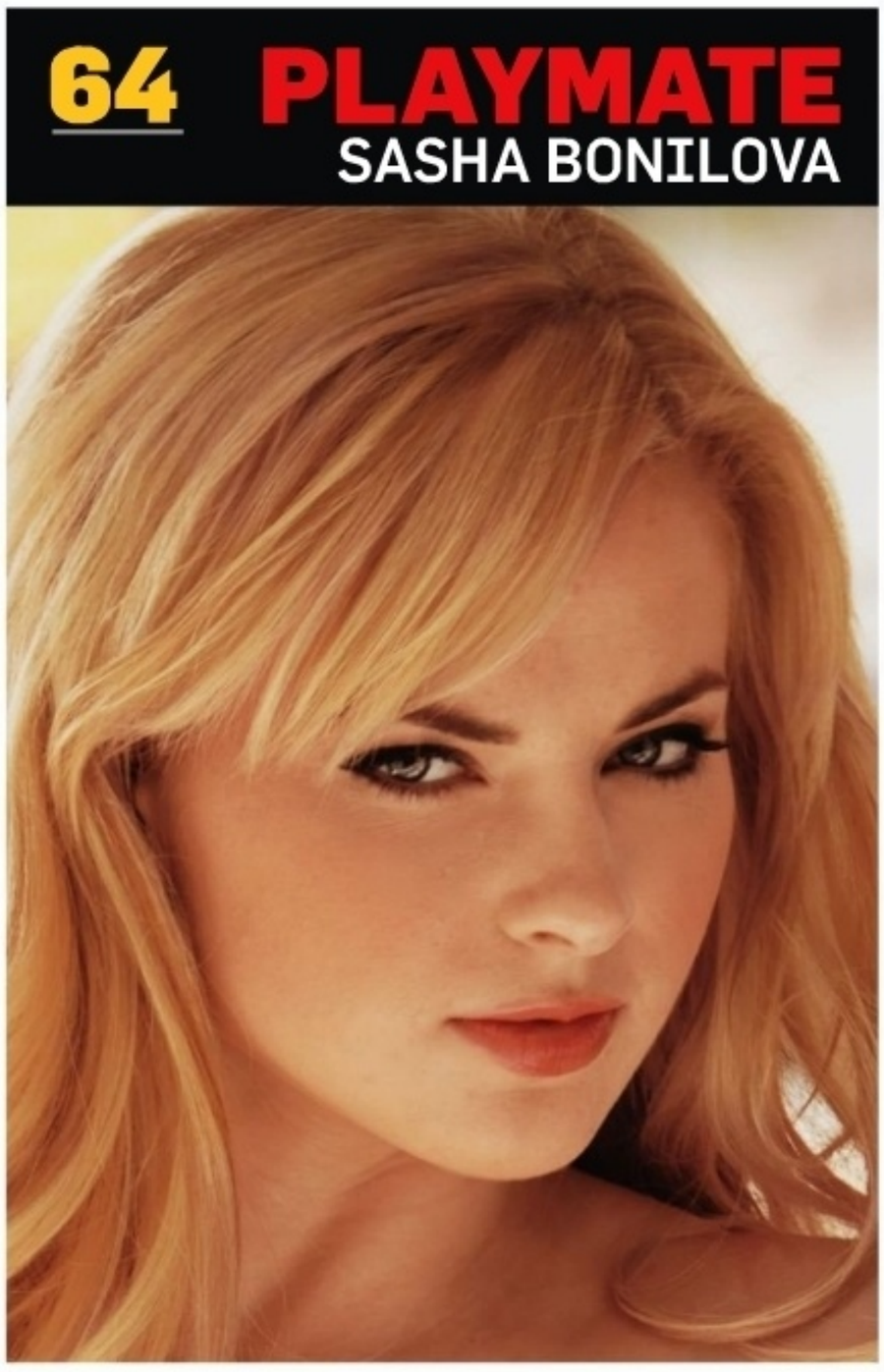

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PLAYMATE CASTING CALLS See all the amazing women who aspire to be PLAYBOY Centerfolds.

REAR VIEW Our celebration of beautiful backsides, starring Playmates Francesca Frigo and Heather Rae Young.

HAPPY 85TH BIRTHDAY, HEF! See the party pics and learn 85 little-known facts about our esteemed founder.

CYBER GIRL OF THE YEAR Her journey took her from Casting Calls to Special Editions to Barmate. Meet the 2011 CGOY.

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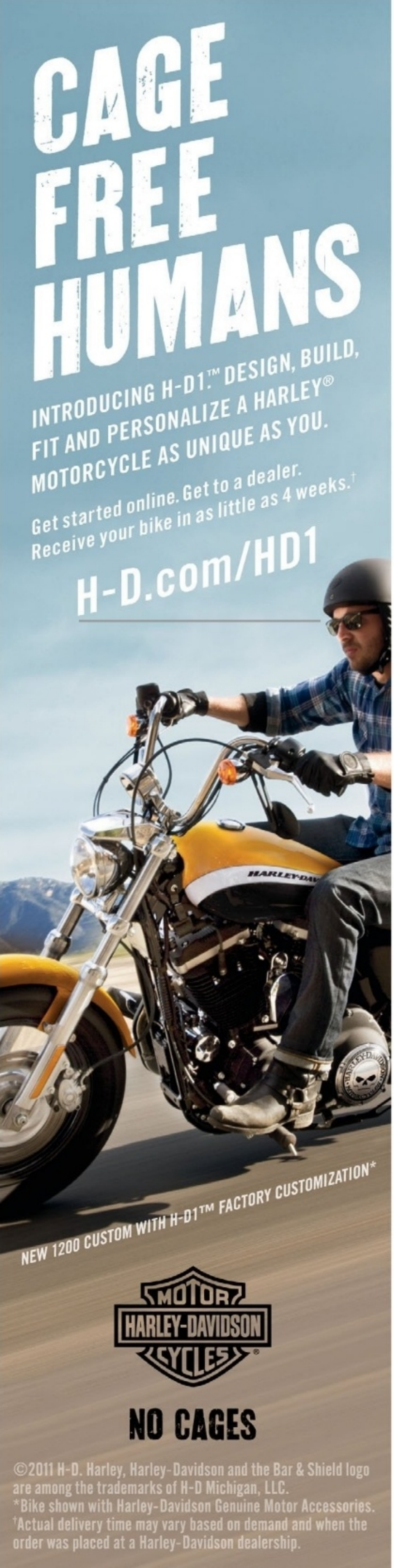

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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

SUPER BOWL AT THE MANSION

Hef watched the Super Bowl with family, friends and fiancée on the really big screen at PMW. Crystal won the third quarter in the box pool, but in the end Hef was happy because he'd rooted for the Packers, as had cheeseheads Cooper Hefner and Samantha Crawley. The Pittsburgh supporters waved Terrible Towels and dressed in Steelers black like Miss August 1986 Ava Fabian and Journey guitarist Neal Schon. Oh, and Samantha brought her new rescue dog, Obi, who looks cute enough for *Puppy Bowl.*

SUPER SOIREE

Before the big game, big names attended the Playboy Super Bowl Party at the Bud Light Hotel in the Big D. Snoop Dogg kept cool amid a patch of Bunnies, *Glee*'s Mark Salling and Hunter Parrish of *Weeds* mellowed out, and Aubrey O'Day smoldered in evening attire.

THE PREMIER SUNDANCE PARTY

When Tinseltown migrated to Park City for Sundance we brought the Hollywood party experience to Utah. At the Playboy Lounge were Andie MacDowell and daughter Rainey Qualley, in town for their flick *Mighty Fine.* They flanked James Franco—who is not a natural blond. Black Eyed Peas DJ Poet prepped for the Super Bowl, and Danny McBride (from *Your Highness* and *Eastbound & Down*) and a guest warmed up for the blockbuster and baseball seasons.

SUPER BOWL PARTY

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The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Playboy's Super Bowl Party in Texas. (1) While the NFL showcased the Packers and the Steelers, we flaunted the Bunnies at the Bud Light Hotel. (2) *Access Hollywood*'s Maria Menounos with PMOY 2006 Kara Monaco and Miss January 2010 Jaime Faith Edmondson. (3) MLB NL MVP Ryan Howard. (4) Geoff Stults (*7th Heaven*), Craig Robinson (*The Office*) and Dave Annable (*Brothers & Sisters*). (5) IndyCar legend Mario Andretti's grandson Marco with Miss May 1998 Deanna Brooks. (6) Natalie Markman and Samantha Borofsky with the Denver Broncos' Brandon Lloyd and Knowshon Moreno. (7) *The League*'s fantasy footballer Paul Scheer. (8) Flo Rida rips it up. (9) *True Blood*'s Ryan Kwanten and his father, Eddie. (10) Meagan Good looking as stunning as she did as a dancer in *You Got Served*. (11) NASCAR driver Kyle Busch and wife Samantha Sarcinella. (12) We invited the Salahis, Tareq and Michaele, here with Miss March 2003 Pennelope Jimenez. (13) Snoop Dogg lights up the stage.

DEAR PLAYBOY

MAN VS. MAN

Neanderthal Love (March) is interesting but disappointing. I had hoped for a more honest account of how early *Homo sapiens* were essentially aggressive chimpanzee hybrids that eliminated every group unfortunate enough to cross their path. It's amazing to see writers and scientists twist themselves into knots to deny our ancestors' complicity in the Neanderthals' extinction. The zoologist Desmond Morris summed up our continued denial in a sentence: "Our climb to the top has been a get-rich-quick story and, like all nouveaux riches, we are very sensitive about our background." Given the wars, genocide, self-deception, corruption and venality plaguing our species, it appears nothing will change until we take off our blinders about our true nature.

Charles Lyell
Glen Cove, New York

HORIZON OR BUST

The Long Road by James R. Petersen adds an intimate, compelling and adventurous touch to the March issue. Time to reread my copy of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

Beau McLendon
Portland, Oregon

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Playmate Ashley Mattingly (*Strength and Beauty,* March) has a nice high kick, but she needs to work on her punches. If she hits anyone with her wrist bent as it is in the photo on page 60, the only person she's going to hurt is herself.

Shari Prange
Bonny Doon, California

We told her that too! Then she kicked us in the nuts.

LAMAR'S OFFENSE

As an African American woman I almost wept while reading the *Playboy Interview* with Lamar Odom of the Los Angeles Lakers (February). Once again a prominent black male marries a white woman and plunges a dagger of indifference into the hearts of his black sisters. How can he speak with love and sensitivity for his wife while figuratively slapping all black women in the face?

Kaneesha Worsham
Oakland, California

As a veteran teacher in the New York City public schools, I take issue with Odom's remarks regarding my work environment. The public schools are not "horrible," as he claims. I teach in Jamaica, Queens near the neighborhood where he grew up and have had some wonderful pedagogical experiences there. Although I applaud Odom for bucking the long odds to become an NBA star, my school would be concerned if one of our student athletes spent class time perfecting his autograph, as Odom says he did. For thousands of young people, including many immigrants, Jamaica is already a place of dreams. Not everyone there is fantasizing about making an escape.

J. Bryan McGeever
Stony Brook, New York

SPRING IN OUR STEP

The March cover of Winter Ave Zoli is one of your best ever. I've been out of the Navy for several decades but have never wanted to untie a knot more.

Roger Reynolds
Lombard, Illinois

Winter Ave Zoli is our favorite season.

As a Greek woman I found your *Girls of the Mediterranean* (March) inspiring. And I love *Sons of Anarchy,* so it was also great to see Winter Ave Zoli on the cover and learn more about her life (*Daughter of Anarchy*).

Anna Galanos
Garland, Texas

The March issue is amazing. Winter is stunning, Playmate Ashley Mattingly is breathtaking and the *Playboy Forum* is thought-provoking. Keep it up!

Brent Simpson
Clarksville, Indiana

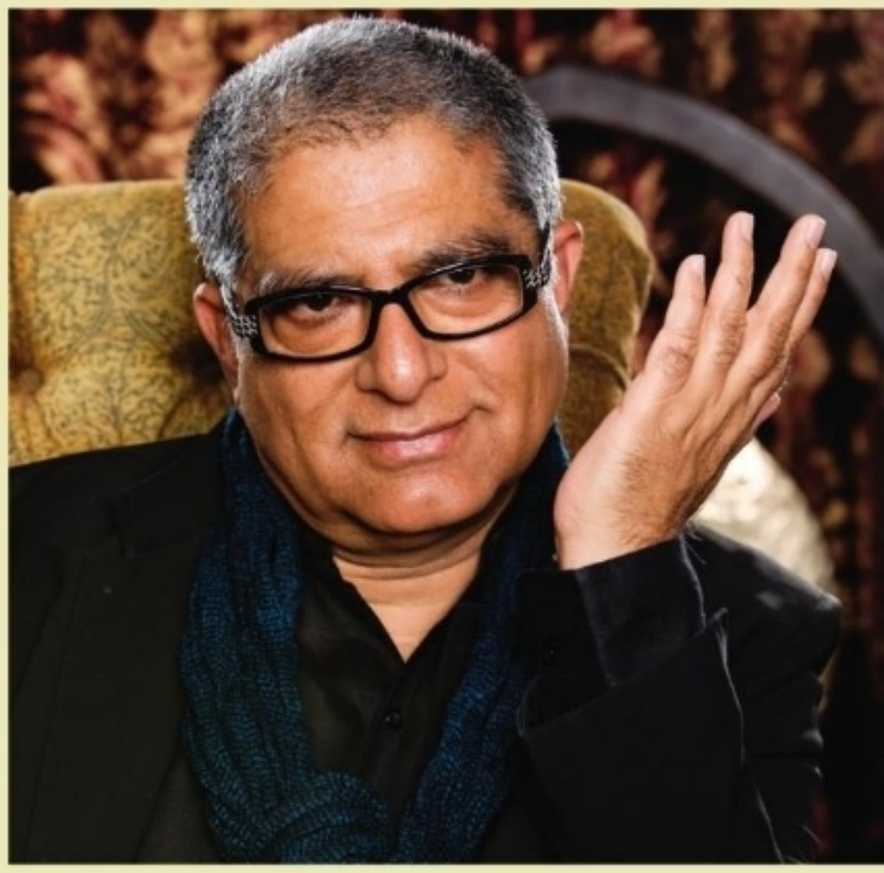
MYSTICAL VIBRATIONS

Deepak Chopra says it angers him that I and other skeptics call him Dr. Woo and accuse him of practicing "woo woo." But the first time I heard this phrase used in association with Chopra was from Deepak himself. Woo woo is the practice of stringing together scientific-sounding but meaningless words, such as "acausal nonlocal superposition of possibilities" and "quantum consciousness." Here's a gem of Deepakese from a debate we had on *Larry King Live* about "near-death experiences": "There are traditions that say the in-body experience is a socially induced collective hallucination. We do not exist in the body. The body exists in us. We do not exist in the world. The world exists in us." Or this nugget: "Birth and death are space-time events in the continuum of life. So the opposite of life is not death. The opposite of death is birth. And the opposite of birth is death. And life is the continuum of birth and death, which goes on and on." Unless such concepts can be attributed to an underlying causal mechanism in the brain subject to scientific testing, they are not science but pseudoscience.

Michael Shermer
Altadena, California

Shermer is executive director of the Skeptics Society (skeptic.com) and author of Why People

Mind Over Medicine



Thank you for the enlightening *Playboy Interview* with Deepak Chopra (March). In 1972, at the age of 28, I suddenly could not move my legs. A neurologist diagnosed me with multiple sclerosis. I refused to "face the facts" and discharged myself to begin a rigorous diet, weight training and meditation regimen. I learned, as Chopra teaches, not to be distracted by the hysteria surrounding all of us. I read *You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay and Chopra's *Quantum Healing* and became a huge fan. Doctors say I most likely was never ill. But they have the need to be right. I have only the desire to stay well.

Rondi Cummings
Vancouver, Washington

50 years of the Playboy Bunny

When Hugh Hefner founded the first Playboy Club in Chicago, he wanted a female waitstaff that would embody the Playboy fantasy. The Playboy Bunny was born, and 50 years later she lives on in our imaginations. With more than 200 amazing photos of classic Bunnies—along with many never-before-seen images—*50 Years of the Playboy Bunny* is the definitive work on a cultural icon. Go to playboystore.com to order. (176 pages, $35, Chronicle Books)

Believe Weird Things, Why Darwin Matters and The Believing Brain.

I am disappointed that Chopra, who has contributed so much to the evolution of our culture, does not mention the source of much of his knowledge and insight, namely Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Transcendental Meditation. You note in the introduction that "celebrities liked him, too: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Jackie Onassis…all came calling," but Maharishi certainly did not "come calling" to Chopra. It was precisely the opposite.

Bill Schieve
Fort Bragg, California

While I found much to like in Chopra's observations on pornography and Fox News, most of the interview left me cold. He dismisses critics such as Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins as "high school teachers" peddling "old science." What does that even mean? When you make claims regarding people's health and well-being you need to have evidence. Vague pronouncements supported by anecdotes are the foundation of religion but have no place in science. With regard to Chopra's belief that Barack Obama should be a one-term president, I agree with Bill Maher, who says anyone who takes this position must say who should replace him. The alternatives range from bad to awful to appalling. And as far as I can tell, none is able to unblock a chakra.

Andrew McEwan
Dayton, Ohio

VICK AND HIS DOGS

I find your articles interesting and informative. I also love the odd stats and the *Playboy Forum*. But I am disgusted by the lines in *Just Win, Baby!* (February) in which A.J. Daulerio writes that he would "express undying devotion" to quarterback Michael Vick "even if he were to gut a border collie in the end zone. This guy will win us two Super Bowls, I thought. Fuck the dogs!" Vick killed lots of dogs. Why doesn't that bother the author or other NFL fans?

Christine Blank
Kansas City, Kansas

Daulerio examines that issue in his piece, in part by sharing his own reflexive first thoughts on Vick and his success on the field. He wasn't endorsing cruelty to animals.

FIGHTING WORDS

Thanks for your article on Bob Probert (*The Berserker of Hockeytown,* February). I'm sorry it couldn't have been done without mentioning the punk Tie Domi. More than once I saw him skate away only to confront a lesser opponent.

Steven Painter
New Castle, Delaware

FOREVER YOUNG

In *Playmate News* (February), screenwriter Aaron Sorkin observes that the first sign you're getting older is when the Playmate is younger than you are. As I tell friends, when you're 14 and sneaking a peek at your dad's stash, the Playmates are women. You know you've gotten old when you see them as girls.

Will Rawald
Phoenix, Arizona

A KILLER'S WAKE

The body of my half brother Jeff Kline was found in 2007 buried under the patio slab of a house in Costa Rica where he had rented a room from the serial killer William Holbert and Laura Reese before they moved to Panama (*Wild Bill,* March). Without the diligent work of investigator Don Winner at Panama-Guide.com, we would never have known Jeff's fate nor

JESSE AUERSALO

Two people you would not want to meet.

that of what may end up being 10 or more other victims. Holbert will probably never be charged with Jeff's murder because authorities are focused on the killings in Bocas del Toro. But Jeff left behind a grieving family, including two daughters. Rest in peace, Jeff, Cher Hughes, Bo Icelar, the Brown family and any other lost souls.

Steve Nelson
District Heights, Maryland

I was a friend of one of Holbert's victims, Cher Hughes. You overlook a chilling detail: In 2009 an ad appeared in *The Bocas Breeze* for the opening party at Holbert's private social club, with the slogan "Only 90 percent of our members survive." It was said to be situated at Cutthroat Cove.

Karl Ike
Bocas del Toro, Panama

FOUND SOUL

You claim in March that Johnny Cash "sold his soul to the devil long ago" ("Here's Johnny," *After Hours*). Cash battled his share of demons, but he was a gentle, generous, considerate and deeply religious man who left with his soul intact.

Max Mandel
Stephens City, Virginia

Time travel at the speed of a 1935 Speedster?

The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principles of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequaled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

The Stauer *1930s Dashtronic* deftly blends the modern functionality of a 21-jewel automatic movement and 3-ATM water resistance with the distinctive, retro look of a jumping display (not an actual jumping complication). The stainless steel 1 1/2" case is complemented with a black alligator-embossed leather band. The band is 9 1/2" long and will fit a 7–8 1/2" wrist.

True to Machine Art esthetics, the sleek brushed stainless steel case is clear on the back, allowing a peek at the inner workings.

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BECOMING ATTRACTION

Sophie Turner

Sophie Turner is the rare model who can represent you in a court of law. "People don't believe me when I tell them I'm a lawyer," she says. "I've played chess in the middle of a bar to prove my intelligence." In 2000 she entered the Australian reality-TV competition *Search for a Supermodel* and won a contract with Ford Models. "But I always wanted to be a lawyer, so I went to school while I worked," she says. "I'd sit in makeup chairs and study and write papers during flights." Currently Sophie is a correspondent on the Logo talk show *The Gossip Queens*, and she has major TV and movie roles in the works, meaning her legal career is on hold—for now. "Eventually I'll be an entertainment lawyer," she says. "It's the perfect career for me." No objections, counselor.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSH RYAN

The rugged British classic *Get Carter,* starring a young Michael Caine, turns 30 this spring.

Raising Caine
Dressed to Kill

He was born Maurice Joseph Micklewhite, and as a lad he moved from his blue-collar town to London to chase dreams on the big screen, naming himself after the movie *The Caine Mutiny.* Of all Michael Caine's early films, *Get Carter* (1971) best melds the grit of his youth with timeless British style. Gangster Jack Carter returns to his hometown to avenge his brother's murder—wearing a suit to die for.

Get Carter (above): Mohair three-piece suit, $1,895, by Burberry. Shirt with long point collar, $89, by Forzieri. Black silk woven tie, $105, by Thomas Pink.

Sexy Basics

American Apparel®

The Hard Sell
Funny Business

American Apparel's ad campaigns over the years have left us breathless and, on occasion, in stitches. (A recent one uses porn stars such as Sasha Grey as models without identifying them.) Have the ads made us buy American Apparel clothing? Nope. But we dig them. The latest (above): a painting by veteran erotic artist Boris Lopez. Delicious.

Big Chill
The Alpha Spa

We hereby take a stand against anti-spa propaganda. Spas are not manly? Spas are for the meek and feminine? Rubbish! Nothing revives a man like a massage with whiskey to follow. Pictured: the Anara at the Grand Hyatt Kauai in Hawaii (anaraspa.com). Just looking at it makes the knots in our neck disappear.

Talk Soup

New England Patriot

For his new book, *Clam Shack: The Ultimate Guide to New England's Most Fantastic Seafood Eateries*, Mike Urban cruised up and down the Northeast coast, eating his research. Packed with photos of salty seaside haunts and wisdom from fry guys and fishermen alike, the book is a summer vacation all its own. Here's a clam chowder recipe he snagged from Bob's Clam Hut in Kittery, Maine as an appetizer.

BOB'S CLAM HUT CHOWDER

2 medium peeled potatoes, cut into ¼-inch cubes
1 small onion, minced
1 rib celery, chopped
1 cup water
1 tbsp. fresh thyme
1 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp. salt
Freshly ground pepper
5 cups clam juice
2 cups minced clams
4 cups whipping cream

Combine all ingredients in a stockpot except the clams, cream and four cups of the clam juice. Heat to a boil, then simmer until potatoes are soft, about 20 minutes. Stir in clams, cream and the rest of the clam juice. Heat to a simmer (do not boil) for about 10 minutes. Serve!

Reggae Roots

Pirates of the Caribbean

Albert Minott's weathered jaw could hardly contain his smile when Minott—lead singer of the Jamaican mento band the Jolly Boys—stepped onto the stage in February for the band's first-ever New York show. Hard to believe, given the band formed in the 1950s in Port Antonio, Jamaica and helped shape the island's reggae sound. They were named by Errol Flynn. Still based in Port Antonio, the Jolly Boys will release their first studio record in 20 years in the U.S. this spring. Keep your eye on jollyboysmusic.com for more tour dates.

The Jolly Boys were a heavy influence on Bob Marley. Coming to a stage near you?

BARMATE

Meganlyn

IN SEARCH OF AMERICA'S HOTTEST BARTENDERS

PLAYBOY: So what brings you to Central Park on a sunny weekend afternoon?
MEGANLYN: I'm getting some air before I go to work.
PLAYBOY: Where do you work?
MEGANLYN: All over. I'm a freelance bartender.
PLAYBOY: Do you work at sports bars?
MEGANLYN: I love the excitement and rush from the people, but it is a bit overwhelming for me.
PLAYBOY: You seem athletic. Are you into sports?
MEGANLYN: I'm a big boxing fan.
PLAYBOY: No way. Who's your favorite?
MEGANLYN: Miguel Cotto was my guy, but Manny Pacquiao always puts on a good show.
PLAYBOY: How did you get into boxing?
MEGANLYN: I used to box.
PLAYBOY: Come again?
MEGANLYN: My brother used to box and I would go and work out in the gym as well. We even had a heavy bag in our living room.
PLAYBOY: Ever been in a bar fight?
MEGANLYN: Almost. Once when I was working, things got hectic. I don't think the girl yelling at me knew I could knock her ass out with a quick one-two combo.

MEGANLYN'S RASPBERRY MARTINI

1½ oz. raspberry vodka
¾ oz. Chambord
Splashes of cranberry and sour mix

Shake with ice, strain into chilled martini glass and garnish with a raspberry.

SEE MORE OF MEGANLYN AT CLUB.PLAYBOY.COM. APPLY TO BE BARMATE AT PLAYBOY.COM/POSE.

Polomobiles
Driving Mr. Ralph

Ralph Lauren keeps his collection of super-rare rides in a Westchester County, New York garage that he calls DAD (for his kids, David, Andrew and Dylan). No offense, but you're not invited. On April 28, however, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris will open the show the Art of the Automobile: Masterpieces From the Ralph Lauren Collection. Above are a few of our favorite Lauren rollers, all of them darn near priceless. If you're reading this, Ralph, hand us some keys, would ya?

Sex Star
French Kiss

Few porn stars manage to cross over to the mainstream. In Europe, Clara Morgane has done so more successfully than anyone in America. The French star of such films as *La Cambrioleuse* and *Projet X* has carved out a career as a respected TV personality, singer (she released her second CD, *Nuits Blanches*, last year) and calendar girl (pictured). Check out her line of lingerie at shockingprincess.com, all self-modeled, naturally.

The copper pot still Prudence. "We wanted to make a truly handmade spirit," says Sipsmith co-founder Fairfax Hall.

Still the One
Gin Blossoms

When Sam Galsworthy and Fairfax Hall launched their new gin, Sipsmith (sipsmith.com), in 2009, the handcrafted custom copper pot still you see here became the first still registered in London in 189 years. Affectionately named Prudence, the still quietly churns out top-notch London dry gin in the neighborhood of Hammersmith. Sipsmith will soon makes its way to the U.S.

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Movie of the Month

By Stephen Rebello

Thor

You might expect an epic, live-action version of Marvel Comics' *Thor* directed by Oscar nominee and famed Shakespearean Kenneth Branagh to be elevated and possibly stodgy, but you'd be wrong—even with a blue-chip cast that includes Anthony Hopkins, Natalie Portman and Stellan Skarsgård. In the title role is Australian actor Chris Hemsworth as the cocky, hammer-happy Norse god-warrior banished to Earth. Branagh has said that *Thor*—for all its high-and-mighty themes—is basically a "fish out of water" tale about a prince who needs to learn humility. "This is a guy who continues to live his own reality," said Branagh. "In his mind, he's still prince of the cosmos. People from Earth getting in his way and asking silly questions is immaterial." Moviegoers will be surprised that an award winner like Branagh just wants to give audiences a good time: "I'm a movie geek. I'm there every weekend, totally and utterly for pleasure."

DVD of the Month

The King's Speech

If you think this is yet another Oscar-winning period piece, be assured it is no pretender to the throne. Charming, brilliant performances from Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush elevate this tale of the stammering Duke of York (and future King George VI), who desperately needs a speech therapist's aid. The simple-sounding premise transforms into a painful scrutiny of royal life, as well as a subtle tearing down of British class distinctions at a time when nationalist ones were being forcibly imposed across pre–World War II Europe. It may not look as angst-ridden as its Oscar brethren, but 2010's best picture has plenty of gravitas...and a royally wicked sense of humor to boot. **Best extras:** Both the DVD and Blu-ray contain a commentary by director Tom Hooper and archival footage of the actual King George VI. ¥¥¥½ *—Bryan Reesman*

Tease Frame

Mädchen Amick is best known for serving cherry pie and steaming coffee as waitress Shelly Johnson on David Lynch and Mark Frost's cult TV series *Twin Peaks.* In 1994's *Dream Lover* (pictured) she makes steam as the titular object of James Spader's affections. Amick is sure to arouse even more sinful thoughts in the horror film *Priest.*

What's in Your Netflix Queue?

Here are the discs **Mark Harmon,** who plays Special Agent Jethro Gibbs on *NCIS: Naval Criminal Investigative Service,* is waiting for in the mail.

Riding Giants: "This doc on big-wave surfing is a must see for Greg Noll fans."

Hester Street: "My wife loves this film."

Night Shift: "Ron Howard really knows comedy. The cast is great, and it's worth revisiting."

Rob Roy: "A favorite film with great acting."

The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill: "A documentary about a homeless musician who befriends a flock of parrots in San Francisco. I have heard great things about this one and am anxious to see it."

Killer Moves

The reboot of *Mortal Kombat* (360, PS3) delivers frantic fights, lingerie-clad ladies and a new X-ray feature that exposes the damage dealt to foes before a finishing move sends their skulls sailing.

Game of the Month

Portal 2

By Jason Buhrmester

One of the most brilliant and original games ever was almost an afterthought. Developers weren't sure what to do with *Portal*, a mind-bending puzzle game that lasted only a few hours, and eventually lumped it in as bonus content with the best-selling *Half-Life* series, where it became a cult classic. In *Portal 2* (360, PC, PS3), the sequel and first full-length game, main character Chell returns to Aperture Laboratories to face off against GLaDOS, a hilariously twisted artificial-intelligence system that delights in challenging her to escape chambers loaded with lasers, fans and other hazards. Chell's only weapons are a gun capable of creating a portal between any two flat surfaces and surface-altering paint that allows her to bounce off walls and run faster. The gameplay is genius, forcing you to think dimensionally to find a way out of each puzzling chamber. The new co-op mode allows players to work together as a pair of robotic characters as GLaDOS attempts to turn them against one another. It's part *WALL-E*, part brainteaser and possibly the game of the year. ¥¥¥¥

Must-Watch TV

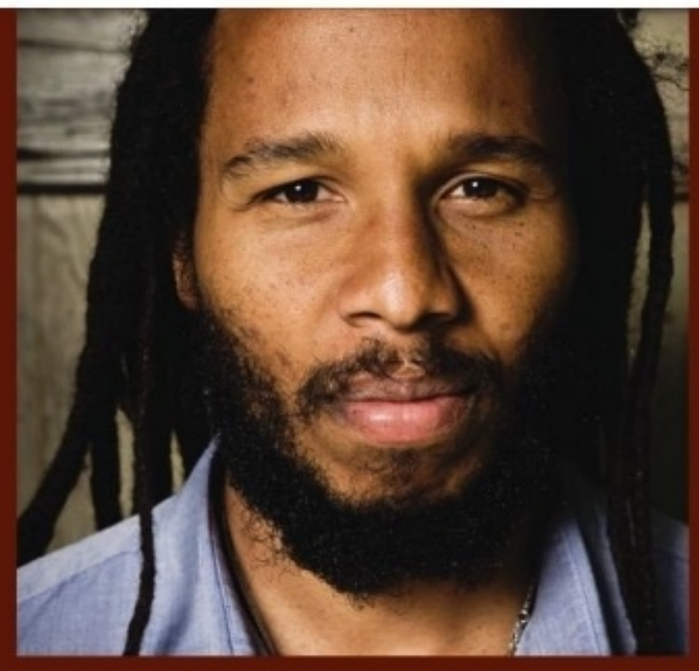
Game of Thrones

Based on the hugely popular fantasy book series, HBO's latest (and perhaps most lavish) drama mashes up the Middle-earth vibe of *Lord of the Rings* with the family politics of *The Sopranos*. After an early scene involving decapitations and zombie-like creatures, the pace slows considerably as we watch the Stark and Lannister families move toward inevitable war. The palace intrigue is compelling, the violence beautifully filmed and the sex gratuitous (and almost exclusively doggy style). ¥¥¥ *—Joe Adalian*

Music

Q&A With Ziggy Marley

By Rob Tannenbaum



You're known as a singer and as Bob Marley's oldest child, and now you're known for your comic book, *Marijuanaman*. What are the title character's superpowers?

He obviously can fly. [*laughs*] Another power is his intuition, his inner consciousness. He lives in a village called Exodus, a reference and an homage to my father.

Does Marijuanaman ever get the munchies?

He doesn't smoke. We didn't want people to think of it as a joke or gimmick. "Oh, Marijuanaman is a weedhead, haha." He's a serious character. His little sidekick Smokestack is a smoker. People around him smoke a lot.

Who would win in a fight between Marijuanaman and Superman?

Marijuanaman, definitely. Superman has strength and speed. Marijuanaman also has physical attributes, but his main power is his spirituality. He has foresight. He can see things before they happen.

How old were you the first time you smoked?

My father was the first one to make me smoke—at a very young age, too—because we were Rasta people. In America that would have been a big crime, giving someone herb at such a young age.

Are you stoned right now?

I'll tell you the truth; I smoke sometimes, for meditation and relaxation, but I don't smoke every day. I don't smoke as much as my father did. Twenty years ago was the best time for herb. All this breeding, all these different names—Trainwreck and Blue Russian—we're manipulating the herb. I don't like that. I don't need a guy to give me more THC than God wants me to have.

RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

PRICE CHECK

$155,000 TO $220,000

THE ESTIMATED AUCTION VALUE OF JOHN LENNON'S FIRST CAR, A 1965 FERRARI 330 GT 2+2 COUPE. THE RECENT SALE PRICE OF ONE OF THE LAST CARS LENNON OWNED, A 1972 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY STATION WAGON: $5,500.

:-)

IN A RECENT POLL ASKING PEOPLE IF THEY THOUGHT THE INTERNET WAS A "GOOD THING," 84% SAID THEY DID, WHILE 16% SAID "NOT REALLY" BECAUSE "WE WERE DOING JUST FINE WITHOUT IT."

ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA RESEARCHERS, HUMANS DIDN'T START TO WEAR CLOTHING UNTIL ABOUT **170,000** YEARS AGO.

WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

IN A RECENT POLL, **77%** OF WOMEN SAID THEY LIKE IT WHEN MEN SHOW EMOTION, SUCH AS CRYING WHEN FEELING MOVED, WHILE 23% SAID THEY DO NOT LIKE IT.

82%

IN 2002, 82% OF AMERICANS LISTED TV AND 14% LISTED THE INTERNET AS ONE OF THEIR TWO MAIN NEWS SOURCES. TODAY 66% LIST TV AND 41% LIST THE INTERNET.

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FOR THE NEXT 19 YEARS, **BABY BOOMERS WILL TURN 65** AT A RATE OF ABOUT 10,000 PER DAY. WHEN THEY'VE ALL REACHED THAT AGE, 18% OF THE U.S. POPULATION WILL BE 65 OR OLDER.

CITIES WITH THE MOST EXPENSIVE HOTELS (BASED ON AVERAGE ROOM RATE):

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2. **NEW YORK**
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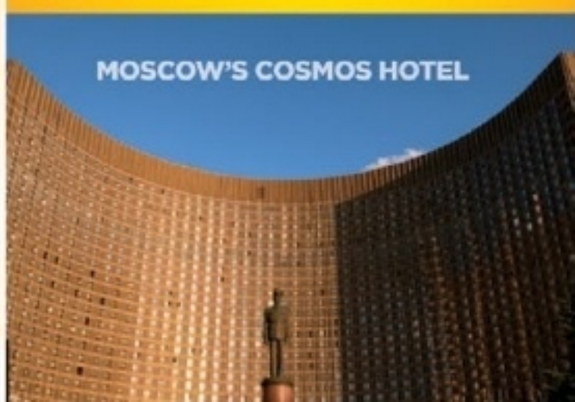
4. **PARIS**
5. **ZURICH**



MY LIFE AS A WORM

By Jonathan Ames

I went to get a coffee so I could write this article. I stood at the counter. A Brooklyn café. Hip, I guess. Filled with people. Saturday brunch. Everyone crowded together.

Personally, I don't enjoy eating in crowds. I find it upsetting to watch people chew; they seem simultaneously vulnerable and horrifying. I prefer to eat alone, like a rat in a wall.

Anyway, the barista's breast jiggled while she steamed some milk for another customer. I registered this, like a machine that records faraway tremors on the seafloor. Then she turned and I caught a glimpse of her armpit underneath her hippieish, beer-frau frock. I quickly noted the armpit's stubble and creases. Then it closed, like an eye.

In the past, when in bed with a woman, I liked to go from the breast to the armpit and back again, like a dumbwaiter, or anything that moves back and forth, trying to transport something. But what was being carried? My need, my lust, my loneliness. And the armpit, if I wanted to rest, was a place to hide. I could stay there like a sucker fish and just hold on.

I used to like to lick the side of the breast, too, as a way station between the nipple and the armpit, and the nipple, in my late-night red-hued peripheral vision, spoke to some preconscious memory back when the nipple, that little volcano top, meant life, meant everything.

And to be crass and vulgar and to crack a cheap joke, I've often thought of the armpit, because I like to lick it, as the other pussy, the way ham is the other white meat.

And I bring all this up because when I saw the breast and the armpit of the barista, I didn't feel anything. Like I said, it barely registered, a tiny seismographic note, a vague pulse. But why was I numb to it? I'll try to explain. Or guess. Guess is more like it.

I'm going to be 47 soon. There was a headline on the cover of a recent *Economist* that said something like LIFE BEGINS AT 46. The headline, because of my age, spoke to me. What I learned in the article is that actually, according to statistics, most privileged Western people, like myself, are at their nadir of *unhappiness* at 46 and that after that you begin to slowly feel better about life but probably not until you're in your 50s.

So the headline was somewhat misleading. Life begins at 46 the way a butterfly begins as a worm. And that's one reason I'm dead inside: I'm right on course—I'm a worm at my nadir—in an actuarial sort of way, at least according to that article.

Why else? I think it's because there's nothing I want. I used to want to be able to pay the rent. It was the goal that animated my adult life for more than 20 years of hand-to-mouth existence. Then I got some success and lost my goal. And I learned I'm not cut out for success. I don't like myself well enough to sustain it. So I prefer being a failure, which means I'll be a failure again, and then I'll hate that.

Also, I just want to be alone. I'm no good at relationships, so it's better just to retire rather than cause anyone pain. And that was my other goal: to fall in love. But I've given up on that one, which is why the jiggling breast and armpit registered like old light from a dead star. But I think we need goals, like Boy Scouts, or we start to die.

I have this great-aunt in a nursing home, she just turned 99. Sometimes I ask her, "Everything all right here?" And she says, "I don't bother anyone." And that's where I'm at. I don't want to bother anyone. That's what seems like a good life. But there must be something more I can do with my little mortal dose of time. My worldview is that of a clown with cancer. I'm all flawed and heartbroken, but I would like to make a contribution. Writing is one way. Maybe it helps a few middle-class people.

I was also thinking that owning a dog and bringing the dog to nursing homes would be good. I'm too self-absorbed to help someone myself, but I could bring a dog to people and let the dog do all the work. The dogs that come to my great-aunt's nursing home are always a big hit. Between owning a dog—I love dogs—and helping people, I would probably stop feeling dead and might even remember why I liked to catch glimpses of secret armpits where I could hide.

The EX Factor

By Lisa Lampanelli

On my very first telephone call with Jimmy, I couldn't believe how much we had in common.

"I like water."

"Me too!"

"How do you like yours?"

"Wet."

"*So do I!*"

My head was spinning! H_2Oh my God! How could two people who had been alive and living miles apart for 48 years feel exactly the same way about so many things?

Before I knew it, I was so caught up in our Mutual Agreement Society that I found myself saying, "You think it's normal to be friends with everyone you've dated since the eighth grade? *I do too!*"

I swear to God I meant it at the time.

A month later I was screaming at Jimmy, "You tell those fucking cunts you're never talking to them again!"

Well, at least we still agreed on the water.

Allow me to explain. My husband, Jimmy, was—and still is—the nicest guy on the planet. Seriously, he makes Gandhi look like Muammar el-Qaddafi. Compared with him, Dr. Oz is a real dick. Most of his breakups have been civilized, and he used to maintain platonic friendships with people he'd dated. My breakups, on the other hand, have had all the subtlety of a rape whistle and the affability and grace of a UFC cage match. Each angry, tearful breakup has been punctuated with shouts of "stretched-out whore" and "worthless piece of shit." And the things my exes called *me* were even worse. I had a strict no-contact rule, though I always found it fun to leave a note on a former beau's car alluding to the fact that his brakes might not work.

When Jimmy had pleasant, innocent conversations with women he used to be involved with, I would seethe, and it was only a matter of time before the inevitable explosion. I simply couldn't *believe* Jimmy thought it was cool for people to have friends who used to be in each others' low places.

Now, I've been lucky. Back in the 1990s it was easy to cut off someone whose only means of contact was a beeper. These days, with more options in technology, it's almost impossible to get rid of your ex. For example, if your ex happens to be a bitter, angry, alcoholic anti-Semite, he can leave dozens of disturbing voice-mail messages, threatening to have you killed and planted in a rose garden before hanging up to go film a scene for *Lethal Weapon 12*. But years ago, once I cut someone out of my life, I was harder to find than a good Jennifer Aniston movie.

In my experience most people—and by "people" I mean insecure, easily threatened types like me—think it's inappropriate to keep in touch with an ex. Once the relationship is over, former lovers should be cut off and never seen again—like James Franco's arm or Andy Dick's dignity.

I say that once the dust has settled, get all your stuff back—and be gone. Gather every item you left at her place, especially the really embarrassing shit. I'm talking about the truly humiliating stuff, like your skid-marked leopard-print bikini briefs, your Chili's Employee of the Month badge and your autographed copy of the Situation's rap CD. When you have a new hottie over, there's nothing worse than your ex stopping by to drop off the industrial-size jug of lube you left at her place.

Some people hem and haw over the decision to stay friends. They say it depends on how long you dated, how traumatic the breakup was and how many STDs she gave you. Some call these people well-balanced and reasonable individuals. I call them idiots. Simply put, keeping in touch with exes—much like marrying Joe Francis—is a bad idea. If you hang out post-relationship, you need to find an activity you enjoy together that doesn't involve jizz—like the Yankees or the opera—and that just takes too much effort. Plus, I don't want to hang around anyone my current lover has banged. It feels creepy—though you *can* save a fortune by sharing herpes medication. And I certainly don't want to be in the same room with a new beau and someone else who's slept with me, mostly because I'm afraid they'll start a support group and try to quit. That's all I need: a bunch of losers sitting in a circle, drinking coffee and telling stories about the last time they bruised my uterus. Hell, I won't keep in touch with anyone who's witnessed me fart, much less someone who's splattered his grandkids on me.

Seriously, why would you possibly want to see your ex? Either the two of you didn't get along or she dumped you for someone who was better looking or richer or both. If that's the case, why should you hang out with the shallow bitch? That would be like eating at a restaurant that fired you. Why give them the extra business when it would be much more fun to spread rumors that they masturbate in the soup?

Lucky for me, Jimmy understands my feelings and doesn't talk to anyone who has seen his penis, except for me, his mom and Ryan Seacrest (long story). And we're a better couple because of it. I feel secure that he's not waxing nostalgic with some whore he fingered in a planetarium in the sixth grade, and he's got more free time to focus on the important things in life, like massaging my feet and making sure the DVR is set for *The Real Housewives of Miami*.

Oh, and just so you know, housewives, he's not allowed to make friends with you bitches either.

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN HESHKA

LAS VEGAS

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Cool Getaway

Luxurious Iceland—now 50 percent off!

Iceland's economic crisis is your gain. These days the U.S. dollar is worth twice as much against the krona as it was in 2008. Some tasty proof: A local Egils beer, once $8, is now just $4. The good times, however, are as plentiful as always. Downtown Reykjavik is the place to stay. Consider Hotel Borg (from $150 a night, en.hotelborg.is), a 1930s art deco gem, or Hotel Reykjavik Centrum (from $200 a night, hotelcentrum.is), built at the site of a 10th century Viking longhouse. Because Icelandic summers tease with nearly 24 hours of daylight—prime travel season is May through September—it's often a guess as to when the party begins and ends. Nasa (english.nasa.is), the city's largest club, features live bands and a frenzied dance floor. For quieter flirting, go to Kaffibarinn (kaffibarinn.is), a bar partly owned by Blur's Damon Albarn. To assemble an entourage, seek out Jón Kári Hilmarsson, your Reykjavik "nightlife friend" ($450, nightlifefriend.is), for introductions to local partyers. Surviving a weekend with Hilmarsson and friends calls for an excursion to the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa ($39, bluelagoon.com), where an in-water massage ($62 for an hour) will heal whatever pain the previous evening inflicted.

Say It Loud

Be heard! Samson's USB Meteor Mic ($99, samsontech.com) brings pitch-perfect modulation to even the most amateur computer audio pursuits—i.e., your Skype chats have never sounded so good. If rock stardom is your aim, it also plays nice with acoustic guitars, pianos, amps and overhead drum kits. Or don't say a thing and let the microphone's big-band-era swagger speak for itself.

Tie One On

Since ties are rarely required in the age of casual business attire, they've ironically morphed from a staid piece of the cubicle uniform into the style statement they were always meant to be. Wear them well with Lee Allison Company's line ($90, leeallison.com). Handmade with English silk, these ties look great around your neck or bedpost.

Children of the Corn

Welcome to julep season, time for the official drink of the Kentucky Derby, which takes place May 7. The recipe hasn't changed in decades—steep a wad of mint overnight in a bottle of bourbon, mix it with simple syrup and pour over ice. Thus, the only way to improve on the julep is to use a bourbon you crave. Below are some of our favorites this spring (from left): Jefferson's Presidential Select 17 Years Old ($105), a wheated whiskey distilled in 1991 that should be in every liquor cabinet; Bulleit Bourbon ($30), oft imbibed on the HBO series *Deadwood;* and Devil's Cut ($24), a new offering from one of the country's most enduring distilleries, Jim Beam.

The Art of Surfing

Just because extreme sports have a slacker ethos doesn't mean they should have a slacker aesthetic. Maker USA, creator of custom snowboards, skateboards and surfboards—such as this hand-etched jellyfish piece ($18,000, makerusa.com)—takes the typically laid-back and transforms it into a graphically intricate board de résistance.

How to Buy a Racehorse

Going it alone is probably cost prohibitive—a promising Thoroughbred can command seven figures—but there's strength in numbers. A racing partnership allows you to own a racehorse in the same way you can purchase stock in Apple. West Point Thoroughbreds (westpointtb.com), for instance, offers an ownership stake in about 90 horses. The average investment is $25,000 to $30,000, and the number of investors per horse ranges from as few as six to as many as 20. West Point calls the sporting shots (who will train the horse, where it will compete, when it will race), but partners receive explanations for these decisions and are encouraged to attend races and training sessions. Your return on investment, however, is like everything else in the sport—a gamble. "You shouldn't do this unless you love horse racing, because it's a high-risk, high-reward endeavor," says West Point president Terry Finley. "But when your horse does finish first, it's an amazing feeling."

Right on Cue

It's not where you source the swine; it's the pits that make your barbecue tops. After installing the culinary centerpieces for such barbecue meccas as 17th Street Bar & Grill in Murphysboro, Illinois, Ole Hickory Pits and its UltraQue smoker ($4,695, olehickorypits.com) are ready to help turn you into a backyard hero. So have at it—whether you're a Texan toiling with brisket, a Kentuckian slaving over mutton or a Carolinian going hog wild. Pitmaster purists such as Mike Wozniak, the reigning champ of the Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational, stick with stacks of wood alone. But with the UltraQue's propane-gas assist, you can maintain that 225° F sweet spot for tender, pull-apart barbecue and spend more time fine-tuning your summer drinks menu.

PLAYBOY ADVISOR

TINA BERNING

What is the proper way to taste test scotch?—R.S., Logan, Utah

The traditional method is to look, sniff, cup and sip. First, hold the glass up to check the whiskey's color, which it picks up from the barrel during aging. A lighter color usually suggests the scotch was aged in a bourbon cask and a darker color in a sherry cask. A tulip-shape glass or brandy snifter will assist you when you "nose" the scotch. You may notice an earthy smell or aromas of vanilla, caramel, florals, spices or fruits. Next, cup the glass in your hand to warm the whiskey. Most people add at least a few drops of water to open the flavor and because most whiskey at proof strength will numb your tongue. Finally, take a large sip and try to detect the flavors as it rolls over your tongue. Also pay attention to the taste after you swallow, known as the "finish." The best way to sample a number of scotches without risking $60 to $80 on a bottle is to organize a tasting party with friends—everyone brings a bottle to share and/or contributes to the pot to buy a bottle no one has tried. Take notes as you try each scotch, because your memory at the end of the night won't be as sharp as when you arrived.

After seeing a porn video featuring a Feeldoe strapless vibrating strap-on, I had to have one. It has an egg-shape knob a woman places in her vagina and holds in place; the other end is a dildo that goes into the guy's ass. I haven't been brave enough to take it out of the package, but I have a naughty fantasy about my husband eating my girlfriend's pussy while I bury the toy in his butt. I want to show him how good it feels when he gets my tail. My girlfriend is pushing me to try this as long as she gets a turn while he eats me out. I would love to, but my husband has never done anything so kinky, and I'm afraid he'll think I'm nuts. How can I make this happen?—B.R., Vestal, New York

Sticking a dildo into your husband's ass is a delicate art; without proper preparation it won't be erotic or pleasurable. It should not be a surprise. You need to work up to such activities with fingers, smaller toys and plenty of lube, which we hope is the experience you had before your husband first penetrated you. Tell him you and your girlfriend have been talking and, if he's willing, would like to have a threesome in which the women are in charge. Resist the urge to whip out your Feeldoe and add, "And we're bringing this, butt boy!" Instead, experiment during the threesome with tongues and well-lubed fingers and gauge his reaction. If it goes well and you arrange for another threeway, have your girlfriend "bring" the Feeldoe so you and she can fuck each other. Then, perhaps during the third romp, present your advanced perversion for his consideration.

I am a 40-year-old white male who is smitten with a 25-year-old black co-worker with Playmate-like attributes. Recon reveals she's not interested, even for lunch. Am I too old? Too white? I'm not sure if I should pursue this or continue to feel like a jackass every time I see her.—J.S., Madison, Wisconsin

You've made the situation more uncomfortable than it needs to be by not being direct. We can't say why she's not interested, and she is under no obligation to explain. But what's a woman to think of a guy who must ask someone else to ask her to lunch on his behalf? You have no reason to feel like a jackass for indicating your interest. You cross that line only if you won't take no for an answer, especially in the workplace.

I spent much of my youth masturbating and now have a problem with premature ejaculation. Also, I was circumcised for medical reasons when I was five. If a circumcision is performed well after birth, is stitching involved that could cause an area to be extra sensitive under the head? I don't have the courage to ask my mother about the procedure.—A.D., Buffalo, Minnesota

We doubt your mother knows much about the circumcision itself, but she may be able to give you a better idea of why it was done. The spot you're referring to is sensitive in every guy, cut or not. This "sweet spot," known as the frenulum, is the point where the foreskin attaches, or was attached, to the shaft. Most young men spend a lot of time masturbating; you may have a problem with rapid ejaculation because you've conditioned yourself to come quickly (to avoid being caught) and always use the same type of stimulation. Masturbate using different techniques, and pay closer attention to when you approach that point of no return so you can practice backing off the moment before that moment.

On a plane to Cleveland I sat next to a cute Asian woman. Her English wasn't good so I kept leaning closer to understand, and that's when it hit me like a slap in the face—the worst breath I have encountered. She was on her way to a job interview and asked if I had any advice. I shook my head no. Should I have told her?—S.V., Sarasota, Florida

Yes. Ideally, if you carry mints, take one for yourself, offer her one and then suggest she take the pack, telling her it's always good to have mints during job interviews. No mints? Ask a flight attendant for some (for yourself, of course). Still no luck? Tell her directly. It's kinder than indifference.

In a group of 30 young women, what are the chances the one you meet will be on her period?—G.L., New York, New York

Scheduling problems with your harem? Many scientists believe that if your group of 30 women live together, such as in a college dorm, they may all eventually menstruate at the same time. In 1971 psychologist Martha McClintock published a study that appeared to show this synchrony occurs; she and others suggest it is because women in close quarters signal one another with pheromones. But other research has refuted what became known as "the McClintock effect," with scientists pointing out that because women's cycles begin at different times, you will always have random overlaps. During the 1990s two Israeli researchers looked at college roommates, athletes, lesbian couples, mothers, sisters, friends and co-workers and sometimes found synchrony and sometimes not. More recently, a 2006 study looked at 186 women living in a dorm over a year

and found no synchrony. Based on this conflicting evidence, it's impossible to know a woman's status. But it hardly matters; there are plenty of fun activities you can do with a menstruating woman in bed (including penetration; see softcup.com), and for some women it's the horniest time of the month.

I read in a newspaper advice column the claim that many college women no longer wear panties but insert tampons to prevent staining their clothes with vaginal secretions. When I went to college some women were missing bras, but no one I met skipped panties. Have you heard of this?—B.L., Ferndale, California

Not yet. We're ambivalent about a woman wearing panties until she takes off her pants. And even then....

On one side of my face my beard grows full and even, but on the other side it's uneven and patchy. I'm 27 and it seems as though it grows a little fuller each year. If I keep shaving, will it grow back thicker?—M.P., Cleveland, Ohio

No, shaving won't help. Beard growth is determined by genetics and testosterone levels. Some men are hairy at 18, some don't achieve a full beard until their late 20s (which may offer hope) and a great many retreat to goatees. Some also experiment with Rogaine, but according to your compatriots on the weak-beard online support forums (and why not?) it can be a hassle and has unpredictable results. The same is said of testosterone gels, and we wouldn't mess around with either without consulting a dermatologist. There is one way to increase testosterone: In 1970 a researcher reported that his beard clippings weighed more when he was anticipating having sex and immediately after having sex. As usual, more sex is the answer.

I have always been attracted to wearing diapers (though not messing them). I have hinted at my fetish to get my wife's reaction, and it hasn't been good. I feel less guilty after searching online and seeing this is relatively common, but I'm afraid of losing her. I hope the Advisor can help, because I read the column and often see great advice for strange problems.—L.C., Appleton, Wisconsin

We assume you've been able to keep this from your wife because you have a satisfying mutual sex life that doesn't involve diapers. After our success in the beard-grower forums, we headed to the adult-diaper and infantilism-support community (adisc.org) and found a number of members who confirmed our belief: It's best to confess. You might first reveal to your wife that you have a special sexual interest. Let her digest that before you tell her what it is. Emphasize that you find her sexually arousing, that you value the relationship and that you feel you have to be honest with her, despite the risks. You'll be heartened to know many men who have revealed their diaper fantasies say it worked out. One guy showed his girlfriend a list of 10 "weird" fetishes he found online, observed her reaction and asked which she thought was his (she guessed correctly on the second try). Another member told his wife after she discovered his online diaper order. He says he felt great relief, concluding, "If you are going to be in a serious relationship with someone and know that you can't give up the diapers, then you have to tell the person you love. This is something that they will have to know about you and have to decide whether they can accept it as part of your personality." If your interest includes seeing your wife or girlfriend in a diaper, members suggest you not bring that up during your first confessional conversation.

According to my wife I'm the only person in the world who would ask this, but when I fill up my Harley with super unleaded do I get what I'm paying for? When the previous customer used the pump he most likely pumped shitty regular. When I select the super unleaded, am I getting a half gallon of crap left in the hose?—T.B., Sabattus, Maine

We have only respect for a man who shows such devotion to his bike. Most pumps have a check valve that holds gas in the hose after a person finishes pumping. This is known as keeping the prime and prevents the next person from waiting 10 to 15 seconds for the gas to arrive from the tank. As a result, you might be pumping some lower-octane fuel before the higher octane arrives. But it's not going to feed 87 octane to your engine. Instead it will mix with the 91 octane your Harley requires and lower it by a tiny amount that has no effect on performance. For instance, if you fill a five-gallon tank and the third of a gallon in the hose is 87 octane but the rest is 91, your tank will be filled with 90.7 octane.

My boyfriend refuses to take me to a strip club. He says it would prevent him from enjoying himself. My ex-boyfriend would invite me for an annual tour of clubs to celebrate his friends' birthdays. I would dress up and guys would buy me lap dances. The dancers were always sweet to me. I particularly enjoyed fucking my boyfriend in the limo while the others were inside. My new boyfriend's ex is a dancer. Does that have something to do with it?—S.A., Baltimore, Maryland

Every guy has a different take on having his girlfriend or wife sitting next to him while another woman attempts to give him an erection. He knows, for good or ill, his partner is studying his reaction. Could it be that your ex was a tourist at the clubs, visiting only occasionally, while your current boyfriend is a regular who is friendly with the dancers? He may not be comfortable sharing that. Or perhaps, based on his most recent relationship, he feels it's best not to again mix his love and fantasy lives. See if he's willing to take you to a club where neither of you knows anyone, such as during a visit to New York or Las Vegas.

In the March 2010 issue you published a photo of Steve McQueen in which he has a double gold chain across his waistcoat. I assume he has a pocket watch at one end. What should be attached to the other?—P.W., Yuen Long, Hong Kong

McQueen is wearing a double Albert chain, named for Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. One chain hooks to a watch placed in a vest pocket and the other is usually attached to a pocketknife but could also hold a cigar cutter, loupe, vesta case, compass or even a USB flash drive. This item is placed in the opposite pocket of the vest. The T-bar at the center goes through the buttonhole, and a fob drop may be attached.

My boyfriend and I are open to including others in our relationship and/or developing additional relationships. We belong to a supportive polyamorous community but like most in our small group want to date outsiders. I need a timely way to explain I'm in a relationship but also available. If I'm at a bar and mention a boyfriend, I'm shut off, which is understandable. But I also hate to explain my status in the first few minutes because it's like asking the guy if he's interested in me. On the other hand, the longer I wait, the more time he invests when he could be working someone he feels is more eligible. What to say? When to say it? Is it hopeless?—C.H., Bloomington, Indiana

Not at all. In The Art and Etiquette of Polyamory, newly translated from the French, Françoise Simpère notes that a man is likely to ask early on if you have a boyfriend or husband. Your response, she says, should be that you are "faithful but not exclusive; you don't believe in a Prince Charming but rather that there are many men out there worthy of getting to know better." That should satisfy him. If not, and he starts quizzing you on how many lovers you've had or wants details about your sex life, excuse yourself, writes Simpère, because "this is not the behavior of a gentleman." Simpère, who has had a dozen lovers during her 30 years of marriage, answers a number of other practical questions in her guide, such as "How should I handle things when my partner has several lovers and I have none?" "What should I do if a lover calls while we are eating?" and our favorite, "How can I ask my partner to babysit when I'm with a lover?" Simpère's solution is to alternate date nights; we say your lover should pay the sitter, even if it's your spouse.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or send e-mail by visiting playboyadvisor.com. The site also has links to download our greatest-hits e-book, Dear Playboy Advisor, and air times for the weekly Advisor Show on Sirius/XM 99.

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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: BARNEY FRANK

A candid conversation with the maverick congressman about America's economic crisis, gay rights, the Middle East and his real problem with the GOP

United States congressman Barney Frank is inarguably one of the most powerful and effective legislators in the House of Representatives. What's arguable is whether he's a good guy or a bad guy. Like so much in Washington, the answer usually comes down to party lines. Democrats tend to love him. Many Republicans don't. But unique in an era of vitriolic partisan politics, even many of Frank's detractors have praised his intelligence and eloquence. One Bush administration official called him "scary smart." Republican Dana Rohrabacher described him as "very fair," which is high praise coming from one of the most conservative House members. Frank has many admirers inside and outside the Beltway. Surveys of Capitol Hill staffers named him the "brainiest" and "most eloquent" member of the House. In a New Yorker profile of Frank, journalist Jeffrey Toobin wrote that in Congress Frank plays the "role of wise guy and wise man." And a recent biography of Frank describes him as "the most unique and fascinating, certainly the most entertaining political figure in Washington."

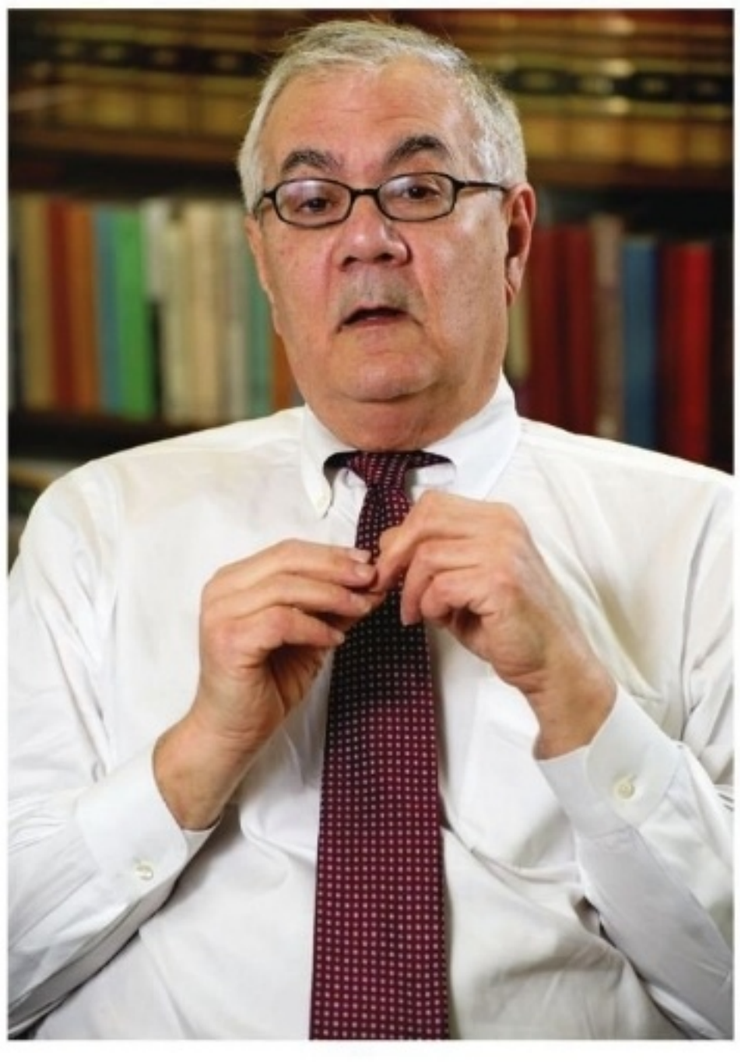
In the 30 years since he was first elected to Congress, Frank has been an advocate for the poor, has worked on many fronts to improve education and health care, was Bill Clinton's staunchest defender throughout the Monica Lewinsky scandal, pushed for the legalization of marijuana, hammered away at both Bush administrations for their wars in Iraq and has done more for gay rights than any other politician. Although he had been at the center of many national debates and instrumental in passing significant legislation, he was never before as prominent as he was in 2007 when he became chairman of the powerful House Financial Services Committee, which oversees the nation's financial institutions, including banks and the securities, insurance and housing industries. Frank was on the hottest seat in the country when his chairmanship coincided with America's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Few Americans need to be reminded of the economic calamities of the past half decade. As HFS chairman, Frank was charged with working with the administration, Congress, economists and others to figure out how the disaster happened and—most important—how to fix it and prevent it from happening again.

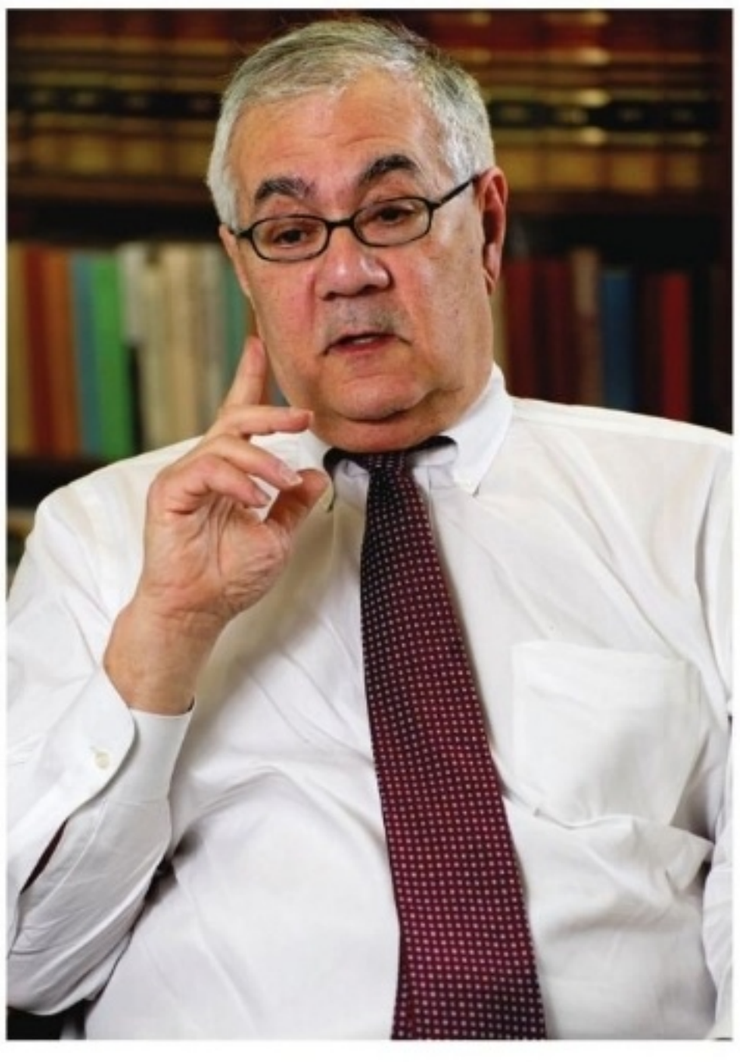
Frank worked with the Bush administration and, after the 2008 election, the Obama administration, to develop, hone and help pass bailouts and other emergency measures. For his efforts he received a great deal of praise—the documentary Inside Job singles Frank out as one of the few heroes of the financial crisis—but he was also criticized, especially for his past defense of the government-backed mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which all but collapsed. Some attacks were virulent, none more so than the one from a raging Bill O'Reilly when Frank was a guest on The O'Reilly Factor. In the exchange, immortalized in a popular YouTube video, O'Reilly outdid himself even by his normal bombastic standards, shrieking at Frank and calling him a coward. Frank, when he could get a word in, chided O'Reilly's "stupidity" and charged that he was "too dumb" to understand complex economics.

The highlight of Frank's chairmanship was when, in close collaboration with then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, he pushed through historic financial-reform legislation that bears his and a Senate colleague's names. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act increases the oversight and regulation of banks and other financial institutions and creates a new agency to protect consumers from practices that helped lead to foreclosures and bankruptcies. Many economists praise Dodd-Frank, saying it could prevent a similar financial crisis in the future. If it survives.

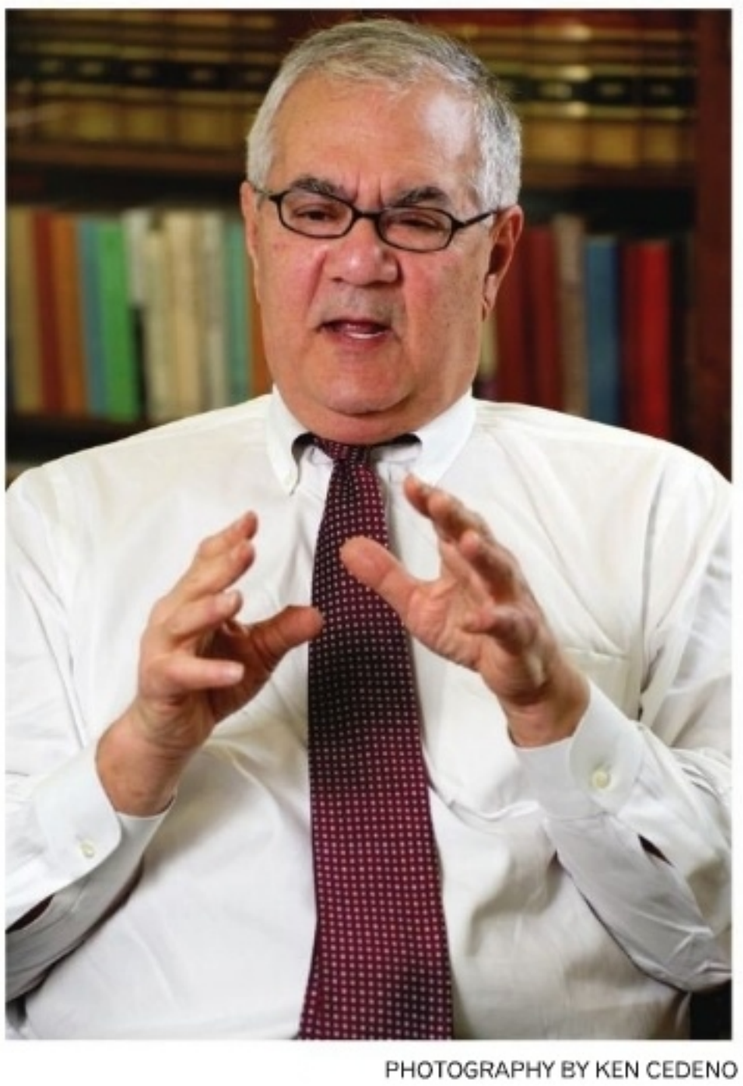
After the 2010 midterm elections, when Republicans took over Congress, Frank lost his chairmanship. The new Congress now has Dodd-Frank in its sights. Without control of the Senate, never mind the White House, it's unlikely Republicans could repeal the law, but



"If we get the terrorists out of Afghanistan, they can go to Pakistan. If they aren't in Pakistan, they can go to Yemen. If not Yemen, Somalia. If not Somalia, Ethiopia. If not there, Syria. The problem is we can't plug every hole."



"Marijuana is clearly a case where the public is way ahead of the politicians. The current policy is ludicrous. It contributes to the cartels and the big traffickers. I'm disappointed in some of my liberal friends for not moving on marijuana."



"I've always pushed for rental housing. Clinton and Bush were pushing home ownership. Owning a home is supposedly the American dream, but I think the American dream is having a place you can afford."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEN CEDENO

they have the power to defund and therefore nullify many of its provisions. Now Frank is leading Democratic Party efforts to protect the reforms—as he describes it, "to mitigate the damage the Republicans can do."

Frank, from Bayonne, New Jersey, served in the Massachusetts state legislature from 1972 until he became a U.S. congressman in 1981. One of his first campaign slogans played off his famous frumpiness: "Neatness isn't everything." Apparently not, because he has won every election since. Frank came out of the closet in 1987 as one of the first openly gay members of Congress, and he and others predicted it would end his political career. However, Frank handily won the next election with his largest margin to date. Since then he has been an outspoken advocate for gay rights. He was the driving force that led to the recent repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Last year Frank, who is 71, said he was considering retiring from Congress. But in early 2011 he announced he will seek reelection next year because he has "unfinished business, including doing what I can to make sure the Republicans don't dismantle financial regulations and thereby set us up for another economic catastrophe." Given this and many other national and international issues Frank is at the epicenter of, we went back to him for a second Playboy Interview. (The first was in 1999, not long after the House impeached Clinton.) We tapped Contributing Editor ***David Sheff,*** *who conducted our earlier interview, for the assignment. Here's Sheff's report:*

"This is one of the few times PLAYBOY *has gone back to a politician for a second interview, in part because they never last that long in office. Many congressional seats are like those in a game of musical chairs, but not Frank's. Since our first interview, his power as a congressman has increased. He hasn't slowed—quite the opposite. I spent a typical day with him, which was filled with nonstop committee hearings, meetings with colleagues and constituents and interviews with CNBC and the BBC, all sandwiched between congressional votes. Frank says being in Congress is less satisfying now that the Republicans are in power, but part of him thrives in a familiar role as outsider and opposition. 'I'm used to being in the minority,' he once said. 'I'm a left-handed gay Jew.'"*

PLAYBOY: After the 2010 midterm elections, which ended your party's hold on the House, is your job less fun?

FRANK: It's not less fun, but it is less stressful. Being chairman is more work. Getting the reform bill was a lot of work because it was substantive and complex. There were many interests fighting against us, but it was important for the country. The stress level was high. There wasn't a lot of sleep. When I was chairman, there were 71 members of the committee. When I went to bed at night, the number I thought about was 36, the number needed to win every vote. It was juggling, debating, deal making. It continued even after we completed the bill because we then had to replicate it to work it out with the Senate. There's still a lot to do, of course, but it's different. For now it's about counterpunching. They set the agenda, and we respond.

PLAYBOY: Are you satisfied with your tenure as chairman?

FRANK: We accomplished a lot of important things at a moment when the country was in economic collapse. We reversed things. Now our job is to protect what we can so it doesn't happen again.

PLAYBOY: What could make it happen again?

FRANK: The financial-reform bill that we passed has in place protections that will prevent the excesses that caused the crisis. It provides regulations and consumer protections. It's all threatened by the Republicans, who want to dismantle it by defunding it.

PLAYBOY: Republicans argue your bill is a job killer and detrimental to the economy.

FRANK: It's the same old thing they always say even though it has been discredited. Most sane people, including economists, agree the collapse was a result of a lack of regulations. But Republicans don't want regulation. They say the free market is always right, that government is always wrong. They don't want any regulation whatsoever, but that's what got us into this mess in the first place.

We don't need to be in Western Europe anymore. They don't need us to defend them. There's no threat. Even if there were, they're wealthy enough to do it on their own.

PLAYBOY: What provisions of financial reform are threatened?

FRANK: Republicans are trying to rederegulate by reducing funding to the SEC, which has new responsibilities for investor protection, and reducing funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. They want to defund these commissions, which are in place to regulate hedge funds and derivatives. They also want to reduce funding for the Bureau of Consumer Protection. I'm less worried about the consumer protection provisions; the Republicans will probably stay away from most of them because it will look bad if they go after consumers. Americans wanted credit card reform, but the other two.... There's been all this talk about the shadow banking system, which is part of what caused the economic crash. We succeeded in finding ways to end it, but the Republicans want it back. I think of the old radio show: What evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows.... What evil lurks in the heart of their shadow financial system? We were trying to do away with it, but the Republicans are working to ensure it stays how it was, which caused the mess in the first place.

PLAYBOY: Besides losing the Democratic majority in the House, how else have things changed with the new Congress, especially as it includes members of the Tea Party?

FRANK: The Republicans are trying to hold their side together, which is difficult because the leadership has to make the Tea Party types happy. It isn't easy for them. They aren't able to move forward in ways they want to because of the instability inherent in that dynamic.

PLAYBOY: Twelve years ago, when asked about the overall caliber of members of Congress, you said Americans were by and large well represented, that our elected representatives were "a smart group." Is that still true?

FRANK: I'd say it's a little less smart. There are people around now who have been elected to the House who wouldn't have been in the past.

PLAYBOY: Why? Many people see the election as a referendum on your party and President Obama. The bottom line is that the public didn't like what you guys did.

FRANK: The problem was that at the time of the election, the economy was weak. Things had been progressing, getting better, but then we were hit by the crisis in Greece. It was bad timing. Also, we were punished because of the bailouts, which made people angry. The bailouts began under Bush, of course, but people's memories are short. There was a perception that the rich were getting richer while everyone else was suffering. It's ironic because the Republicans support the executive salaries that people rightfully hate. They don't want to tax the rich. People support the Republicans against their own interests. But people are angry, which I understand. So it was a combination of the bad economy and anger because the people who caused the bad economy appeared to be getting rewarded.

PLAYBOY: In retrospect, were the bailouts the right strategy?

FRANK: The strategy has been vindicated. Each one—AIG, TARP, the banks, the car companies. There was a big problem that would have been impossible to fix overnight, and it had no one solution, but we stopped things from getting as bad as they could have. The entire economy was at risk of complete collapse, and we stopped that.

PLAYBOY: Republicans say financial reform and the health care bill will cost jobs at a time when unemployment is still high.

FRANK: It's nonsense. It's the same right-wing ideology. It's a Republican mantra, but nothing we did will cost jobs.

PLAYBOY: You said you understand voter anger. Do you understand the reaction that led to a Congress with 35 newly elected members who have never before held political office? People were fed up.

FRANK: Yes, and when things aren't going well, Americans want change.

PLAYBOY: What's the impact of all those untested and inexperienced members in the House?

FRANK: I haven't felt an impact yet, but the Republican leadership has. It has had to pull back and adopt positions it never would have before. It hasn't been able to maintain control. The Republican leadership needs to build itself to the point that it can exercise some restraint on its extremist members. I don't know if it will be able to. In my opinion, the extremism is destructive because there's no room for compromise—or never mind compromise; there's no room for civil debate. The big difference is that many of these people don't believe the differences we have are legitimate disagreements between reasonable people. It used to be that way. Now the Republicans have to take a far angrier tone. There's no working together. They don't accept give-and-take. Moderate Republicans have to worry about appearing moderate; they have to hate us.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying moderate Republicans aren't being honest about their own positions and their rhetoric is only to placate the extreme right?

FRANK: For some, it's legitimate. For some, it's posturing. At Ted Kennedy's funeral, Orrin Hatch boasted in an almost unseemly fashion about what a great friend he was. He told all these stories in which Kennedy was the hero. Now he's repudiating the notion that he can work with Democrats.

PLAYBOY: There has always been angry and divisive politics. Are things worse now?

FRANK: It's been worse ever since Newt Gingrich took over the Republicans. He realized the party wouldn't make inroads the way it was going, so it was very calculated. He said, "We're never going to win until we demonize the Democrats. Stop saying they're honorable people with whom we disagree and start saying they're bad people, evil people."

PLAYBOY: You were embroiled in the battles as they manifested during the attempt by Gingrich and other Republicans to impeach President Clinton for the Monica Lewinsky scandal. You supported Clinton. Looking back, how do you assess that time?

FRANK: It was one of the most ludicrous times in the history of Washington, when Congress spent all its time and money on the president's sex life rather than addressing the nation's real problems.

PLAYBOY: At the time you famously said you were unable to fully read special prosecutor Kenneth Starr's report on his investigation into Clinton's relationship with Lewinsky because it entailed "too much reading about heterosexual sex."

FRANK: It was an embarrassing time for the country. The anger and vitriol have been going on since then, a focus on things that don't matter but are a distraction and get people angry. It's manipulative and counterproductive. As a result, we have a Congress in which many people don't want to find things we can agree on, which means there will be a stalemate. They took advantage of the climate in America. Now we have all these angry people representing other angry people. Rather than working together to fix things, to repair things, the Republicans are just using that anger to try to dismantle the progress we made that helped pull us out of the recession.

PLAYBOY: Part of the Republicans' criticism of you and your fellow Democrats is that your solutions to the economic problem—new regulations, new and expanded regulatory agencies—involve spending money we don't have.

FRANK: We have the money to fund the bill, and I'd argue we can't afford not to.

PLAYBOY: Along with killing the financial reforms, Republicans want to kill Obama's health care bill. Will they succeed?

FRANK: I don't think they'll get away with it. By the election in 2012, important provisions of the health care bill will have kicked in, and people will see the catastrophes they've been warned about haven't happened. Reality will refute the prejudice. People will see that they're beneficiaries. A pilot stopped me a few days ago in an airport and thanked me. He said, "My son has health care now. Don't let them take it away." More and more people will experience the change firsthand.

PLAYBOY: As with the financial reforms, Republicans claim America can't afford the health care bill. They continue to cite the budget and the deficit.

FRANK: If they're really concerned about the budget and deficit, they should join me to cut the defense budget. It needs massive reductions. We can save at least $150 billion a year.

PLAYBOY: It's a familiar split between the two parties. Isn't it unlikely Republicans will cut the defense budget?

FRANK: Actually at this point they may come on board. The Tea Partyers want to trim government spending and don't want America to be the world's police, so maybe there's hope. It's something we agree on.

PLAYBOY: Does it surprise you that you and the Tea Party Republicans agree on an issue?

FRANK: Well, the problem with their take on this is that some of it comes from xenophobia. They'd cut economic assistance to poor children who aren't American. However, there's still agreement that spending tens of billions of dollars on nation building doesn't work or make sense. There's agreement that we're spending far too much on defense. It's inarguable we're way overcommitted.

PLAYBOY: How would you cut defense spending?

FRANK: We don't need to be in Western Europe anymore. They don't need us to defend them. From whom? There's no threat. Even if there were, they're wealthy enough to do it on their own. I'd cut way back on our nuclear arsenal.

Our nuclear capabilities are ridiculous. We're overloaded in nuclear weapons and Russia isn't a threat anymore. Generally we're greatly overcommitted throughout the world. Yes, North Korea is a problem, and we should stay in South Korea, but we don't need troops in Japan. Why? We're still trying to be the world's policeman and have no business doing so. It gets us into trouble, and we can't afford it.

PLAYBOY: What would you do about the threat of a nuclear Iran?

FRANK: It's a problem, but the Iranians know that if they were to use nuclear weapons, we would retaliate heavily. We have a hundred times more weapons than we need to do that.

PLAYBOY: How would cuts affect the war on terrorism?

FRANK: The biggest threat now is terrorism. Yes, it's a real threat. They do want to kill us. But it's not expensive to fight terrorism. You don't win with nuclear submarines. I wish you did. If you did, we'd win, because they don't have any.

PLAYBOY: Do you agree we need a military presence in countries to prevent them from becoming havens for terrorists?

FRANK: The problem is we can't plug every hole. It's impossible. If we get the terrorists out of Afghanistan, they can go to Pakistan. If they aren't in Pakistan, they can go to Yemen. If not Yemen, Somalia. If not Somalia, Ethiopia. If not there, Syria, Lebanon, anywhere. It doesn't make sense.

PLAYBOY: What would you have us do?

FRANK: Bring the troops home, bring the money home and do the best we can to protect ourselves. We can do a lot with that money. That will make us stronger.

PLAYBOY: How exactly should we fight terrorism?

FRANK: Not by occupying countries. Not by invading them. The more than trillion dollars we spent in Iraq was our biggest mistake, not just because of all that wasted money but because we create terrorists when we try nation building. The biggest mistake any president ever made was when Bush invaded Iraq. His argument was that it was going to stabilize the Middle East and intimidate radicals, but all it did was create more radicals. Iran was strengthened and so were the terrorists. Fighting terrorism is important, but it's a different kind of fight: targeted, precise. It's also much less expensive.

PLAYBOY: Politicians always seem unwilling to cut defense because they are afraid they'll seem weak.

FRANK: Yes, and it's the biggest constraint on Democrats because they're especially afraid of being accused of being weak. My one big criticism of Obama is that he has bought into that.

PLAYBOY: Aren't politicians also loath to cut defense spending because it creates jobs and defense contractors are a powerful lobby?

FRANK: It's not the main problem. The problem is the ideology: "America has to be strong." Yeah, it does, but we don't have to waste money. A high-ranking general told a friend, "We gear up for a threat and then we never undo it, and then we gear up for the next threat...." That's how we got where we are, and no one's willing to take it on. As I said, though, that may change now. We need the money for other things.

PLAYBOY: You said your one criticism of Obama is his refusal to cut defense, which in his last budget remained at similar levels as in the past. How has he done on other fronts? How do you rate his presidency so far?

FRANK: He's done a good job. He's gotten a lot done. Working through the financial-reform bill was huge. It was very hard. There was a great collaboration with him, and I'm pleased by that. Health care is very important. I'm not a foreign-policy expert, but I think he's doing a good job there, too.

PLAYBOY: How do you respond to critics of his handling of the revolution in Egypt as it unfolded?

Politics has gotten meaner, and no one listens to one another. Polarization isn't good. It divides us, which means we can't effectively solve problems.

FRANK: I think he was very good. He played it as he should have. My complaint isn't about the way he handled it. It's about our general view that we have anything to say about it in the first place. It's important to remember that it was their business and not ours. My view is it's not ours to handle. We're not in charge. It's part of the whole overreach of America that says we're supposed to decide what's going to happen in Egypt. Why do we set ourselves up as if we have influence? We had no influence on what happened. We have to deflate expectations that we can solve everyone's problems.

PLAYBOY: Are you worried post-Mubarak Egypt could follow Iran and become another Islamic fundamentalist state?

FRANK: It's a concern. The relationship with Israel is a concern too. However, the new government in Egypt is accountable to its people in a way it never was before. Most people will judge them on how they handle the economy. They have to improve it. That's what most people want. To do that, they have to keep military expenses down. If they were to escalate hostilities, it would be bad for their economy. Also, we have some common interests. One is that Iran is hostile, and any Egyptian government should be worried about a nuclear Iran. We also have a common concern about Hamas, which is on Egypt's border. But yes, it's a risk. We support democracy, but it can produce terrible radicalism. What we should try to do is work with these people. That doesn't mean telling them what we think they should do. It means we should work with them in ways that will encourage a benign democracy. In the meantime, we have a lot to do at home; we should be working to solve domestic problems.

PLAYBOY: A domestic problem you've frequently addressed is the lack of housing for the poor. Do you acknowledge it was the government's encouragement and support of home ownership that set up many people to take on mortgages they couldn't afford?

FRANK: I've always pushed for *rental* housing. Clinton and Bush were pushing home ownership, but I've always been skeptical of it. Owning a home is supposedly the American dream, but I think the American dream is having a place to live in that you can afford. People were sold a bill of goods. They were told that if you owned a home, you'd get rich as the house appreciated. But that's not what's been happening. For many people, renting is a better alternative.

PLAYBOY: Larry Summers, who was one of the president's main economic advisors, argued that renting doesn't help people. People need pride of ownership. He said, "People don't wash rented cars."

FRANK: Cars and houses are different, but people do wash leased cars. I think we should have spent this time building quality affordable rental housing rather than getting people into homes they couldn't afford.

PLAYBOY: The entities that helped many Americans buy homes they couldn't afford were the government's lending institutions, Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, which were under your purview as chairman. You were attacked for telling Americans that Freddie and Fannie were in good shape even as they were on the brink of collapse. At the time you said they "were not endangering the fiscal health of the country." How do you respond to charges that you are partly responsible for people losing fortunes by investing in Freddie and Fannie?

FRANK: When I said they were in reasonable shape, I thought they were. I was too sanguine. I made a mistake. But when I said that, we were in the minority in Congress. I had no influence over anything. It didn't matter what I said. When it did matter, the next year, when we were in power, I changed my position.

PLAYBOY: Do you accept any responsibility?

FRANK: Responsibility for what? I wasn't in power then. *(continued on page 106)*

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BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

THE UPRISING IN EGYPT CHANGED THE WORLD. BUT BEHIND THE HEADLINES WERE PERSONAL STORIES— SOME GOOD, SOME BAD—ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO GATHERED IN TAHRIR SQUARE

SCENES FROM A REVOLUTION

BY SHASHANK BENGALI

THE REVOLUTION NO ONE SAW COMING. A beaten, injured anti-Mubarak demonstrator holds a bloodied Egyptian flag.

ON a brisk afternoon in early January, I met Ahmed Salah on a busy street corner in downtown Cairo along the Nile River. I was interviewing Egyptians for a newspaper story about the epidemic of sexual harassment in the capital, and a journalist friend had recommended I hire Salah to translate. "Just don't take him to any smoky cafés," my friend said, "because he hates cigarette smoke." In two-pack-a-day Cairo, I thought, this was a bit like meeting an L.A. resident who deplored sunshine. When Salah showed up, however, I saw that he had a persistent wheeze, and he explained that it came from spending many nights sleeping on cold bare floors in Egyptian police detention.

For more than a decade, Salah had worked as a political activist and organizer for various opposition parties and movements that had tried—but failed—to challenge President Hosni Mubarak, who had ruled ruthlessly since 1981. At every turn, Mubarak's all-powerful security services had stymied protests and punished activists like Salah with arrests and beatings. During one of his prolonged detentions, Salah staged a hunger strike that brought him enough renown that he was called to Washington to testify before a congressional committee about human rights in Egypt. But he was a marked man in his own country, forever living in fear of his next run-in with the police.

After my interviews Salah and I found an open-air café tucked into an alleyway, sat on plastic chairs and sipped Cokes as he talked about revolution. About 40 years old, with glasses and a mop of curly black hair, Salah looked like an accountant, not a political rabble-rouser. But for half an hour he spoke passionately about the burgeoning popular uprising in the North African country of Tunisia and about his and his fellow activists' plans to launch solidarity marches from multiple sites across Cairo in the ensuing weeks.

"I think something big is coming," he said as we parted. I told him I'd stay in touch, but I thought he was doomed. It was conventional wisdom that nothing could topple the 82-year-old Mubarak, one of the Arab world's most entrenched leaders and stalwart ally to five American presidents.

By the time we spoke again, the protests Salah helped organize had blossomed into the biggest popular revolt in modern Egyptian history.

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I returned to Cairo on February 1 after a few weeks in Iraq, which suddenly seemed placid by comparison. In fact, although I had been globe-trotting for seven years as a foreign correspondent for McClatchy newspapers, reporting from more than 30 countries and war zones from Somalia to Lebanon, little could prepare me for the particular chaos and uncertainty of revolutionary Cairo.

Since taking a six-month Middle East posting in September, I'd been using Cairo as a base—a safe haven where I could walk the streets, watch NFL games on satellite and abuse 24-hour fast-food delivery in between rougher assignments to Iraq and Sudan. Cairo was a big and frenzied metropolis of some 17 million people, yes, but by Middle Eastern standards it was also remarkably cosmopolitan, efficient and foreigner-friendly. A few weeks earlier my parents had visited from California, and we'd walked up and down the banks of the shimmering Nile until late at night.

Of course, we were reveling in the security that only a police state could guarantee. In his last days in power, Mubarak turned that security establishment on the people who were telling the world about the uprising: journalists like me.

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Only one taxi driver I reached had been willing to meet me at the airport. The parking lot was a study in chaos. Large buses were double- and triple-parked, filled with American citizens booked on U.S.

government–chartered evacuation flights. Outside the departures area a sea of Egyptians and less fortunate foreigners sat on their luggage or pressed their noses to the locked doors, praying for a way out.

Yet again in this job, while so many people were trying to leave a place, I was trying to get in.

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Memo (pronounced *mee-mo,* short for Mohammed) is a tough, leathery-skinned Bedouin with a salt-and-pepper buzz cut that gives him the look of an old boxer. He also curses like one.

"Fucking Mubarak, he wants to destroy this country," he said as he grabbed my bags and hauled them out to his car. It was a clean new Chinese-made SUV, and it was blocked by a row of buses honking their horns.

Many years ago, as he told it, Memo lived in Colorado Springs, where he worked as an entry-level engineer for IBM. His first marriage, to an Arab American woman, fizzled after a few years. A second marriage didn't work out either, and the vagaries of U.S. divorce law were too much for the descendant of an ancient clan of nomads to handle.

"Your country made my life too complicated," Memo said.

It was one of the banal indignities of Egyptian life that a man who'd worked for one of the top firms in the United States could find no better job in his home country than driving a taxi. He rose before dawn most days to take up his post outside the Marriott, a five-star hotel built into a former palace, competing with dozens of drivers to ferry well-heeled tourists to the pyramids or bazaars of old Cairo for pitifully low fares. This was how I'd learned about Memo: My parents had hired him to take them around the city for half a day, for which they'd paid about $12 with tip.

When he first saw me, he sized me up. "Good," he said finally. "You look Egyptian." With my dark complexion—my parents hail from India—I stood out far less in a crowd than fair-skinned journalists and TV people carrying big cameras. But I spoke no Arabic, so still I felt vulnerable.

"If we get stopped by anyone, just let me talk. Now let's go," Memo said, and he pulled onto the empty highway leading into the city.

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Salah was one of the first people I called back in Cairo. He politely declined my offer to meet in Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the demonstrations.

"I look like a protester," he said.

During the first days of the protests he was at the front of a crowd of people near the square when Mubarak's riot police opened fire with rubber bullets, one of which struck him in the head. An officer also broke his nose, so he now wore a big bandage on the middle of his face. Any pro-government thug roaming the streets would immediately recognize him as someone from what people were starting to call the Republic of Tahrir.

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Before the uprising it didn't take much to see that Cairo was simmering with problems—the strangest of which was the epidemic of sexual harassment of women. In a 2008 survey, four out of five Egyptian women reported being groped, rubbed, squeezed, teased, catcalled, ogled or otherwise treated inappropriately by strange men in public. Perhaps the most infamous case would occur at the end of the uprising, when CBS's Lara Logan was sexually assaulted by a mob outside Tahrir.

When I began reporting on the phenomenon, the stories women told would make anyone blush.

A young brunette was reading a book inside her parked car one evening when a man walked up to her window and started masturbating. A young American friend, on her first night in the city, had a taxi driver thrust his cell phone into her hand when she went to pay her fare; on the screen was a picture of a naked woman with her legs wrapped around a palm tree.

I COULD STAND ON MY BALCONY AND WATCH THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

Tahrir Square in Cairo became ground zero for the uprising. In an effort to quell the revolt, the government moved tanks into the city while demonstrators prayed, beat portraits of Hosni Mubarak with shoes and set cars on fire. Fittingly, *tahrir* means "liberation" in Arabic.

What's wrong with the men in Egypt? Almost everyone blamed poverty, ignorance, chauvinism and religious hypocrisy. "Add to that corruption and poor law enforcement and you can easily see the whole picture," Marwa Rakha, who writes often on relationships and sexual culture in Cairo, told me. "The government is more concerned with putting out other fires: bloggers, Facebook demonstrations, [police abuse] victims, presidency-related rumors, student riots, workers' protests, new media exposés, opposition parties…."

She went on. But I got the point. Egypt, welcoming to outsiders and seemingly safe, was rotting on the inside.

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"Protest view," the receptionist at the Ramses Hilton said with a smile when he checked me in. I had been told by reporter friends which rooms to ask for. Any number ending in six to 14 would have you facing south, overlooking Tahrir Square and, just as important, a good location for a satellite modem, which was the only way to transmit stories and pictures since Mubarak had shut down the internet in a bid to thwart the protests.

There's an oddly warm familiarity to a war zone hotel—the inevitably faded but ideally situated place that journalists commandeer in times of crisis after the tourists have decamped. In the lobby I saw old friends and familiar names. CNN was there, as were a few other American networks, *The Los Angeles Times* and an alphabet soup of European and Asian channels. One broadcast reporter complained that she kept getting knocked off her satellite feed because so many people were trying to connect.

"I can't stay on long enough to get through one goddamn live shot," she said.

My 19th-floor room was uninspiring, but the view more than justified the $350 price tag. Tahrir Square was filled with demonstrators. For the next several days I could stand on my balcony and watch the battle for the future of the Middle East.

•

Alaa Al Aswany's dental office sits on the fourth floor of an apartment block in Garden City, an elegant, tree-lined neighborhood of Cairo that evokes the West Village. A simple sign outside the building advertises his credentials, including a degree in dentistry from the University of Illinois at Chicago. When I visited on the morning of February 2, however, it wasn't for my teeth.

Aswany, a thick-chested man with a commanding baritone, also happens to be Egypt's most celebrated novelist. (A caricature on the wall of his office shows him writing under the light of a dentist's chair.) For the past week he had closed his dental practice and joined the protests that had transfixed the world. Many saw the roots of the uprising—the venality of the ruling class, the ceaseless corruption, the stagnant economy, a disaffected young generation facing dwindling job prospects—in Aswany's 2002 bestseller, *The Yacoubian Building*, which traced the rot in a once-proud society through the lives of residents of one Garden City apartment block.

"I think there is a link between the frustration of these characters and the frustration of millions of young Egyptians who you could see in the street, calling for ending the whole old system and beginning a new Egypt," Aswany said.

There was pride and hope in his voice, because it seemed that Mubarak finally was losing his grip. The night before, he'd appeared on state television and offered a stunning concession: He would step down when his current term, his fifth, expired in the fall.

The protesters weren't appeased—they wanted Mubarak gone immediately—but Aswany felt the end was nigh. He found symbolism in the last patient he saw before *(continued on page 102)*

"Egypt is free!" yelled demonstrators as they climbed onto tanks and set off fireworks when President Hosni Mubarak (below right) finally stepped down. Tareq Hussein Ali (below left), a 30-year-old lawyer, had been one of the protesters. Beaten with rocks by pro-government forces, he kept fighting, telling his parents, "I will come home victorious, or you will receive my dead body."

"The team voted to give her a custom letter sweater...."

With a reboot of the 1968 sci-fi classic *Barbarella* in development, we pay homage to the original interstellar sex romp. An appreciation by *New York Times* film critic A.O. Scott

LOST IN SPACE

The next time we shoot one of those probes into space packed full of stuff intended to give whoever is out there a basic idea of what the human race is all about, we could do worse than to include a DVD of Roger Vadim's *Barbarella.* While nobody is likely to proclaim this sci-fi camp classic a masterpiece, it does offer a reasonable summation of much that is noble, wonderful and silly in our civilization. For one thing, the movie, in its nutty, lo-fi way, celebrates our technological ingenuity, as well as our persistent itch to fly off into space. Other artifacts of the era tackle the same themes, of course—the original *Star Trek* television series, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and even *Planet of the Apes*. But none of them has an opening title sequence featuring a zero-gravity striptease in a fur-lined boudoir.

It's possible that our notional alien scholars wouldn't make it any further than that remarkable opening. Plenty of earthlings have never seen *Barbarella* but nonetheless have etched in their brains the image of Jane Fonda in boots and a Plexiglas chest plate, brandishing a ray gun, thanks to an iconic still that was published on the cover of *Life* magazine. Similarly, anyone who has seen all of *Barbarella* and forgotten most of the plot will have no trouble recalling those first few minutes, in which we see almost all of Barbarella herself.

The up-front nudity was a novelty at the time, but it's more than the sight of Fonda, then almost 30, in the altogether that makes the sequence such a repository of cultural information. As Barbarella spins through the air, peeling off her silver astronaut suit, we take in the decor of her bachelorette space pod: the fur walls, the *Venus de Milo*–like statue and the reproduction of painter Georges Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte.* This image of swingin' futuristic classiness—if that's what you'd call it—is wrapped up in what strikes the 21st century sensibility as pure retro cheese. Trippy white letters float across the frame to cover Barbarella's naughty bits, and the soundtrack bursts

Photography by
Tony Kelly

Barbarella played by
Chelsea Salmon

Stranded on a barren planet (a.k.a. the California desert), our Barbarella (a.k.a. model Chelsea Salmon) makes herself at home.

into a string-heavy, wah-wah-laden song that evokes an acid trip at a Vegas lounge in the middle of a Shriners convention.

Barbarella's production history suggests an even crazier, more florid pop mashup. Then *New York Times* film critic Renata Adler called the film "a special kind of mess," and she was perhaps more correct than she knew. Based on a cult comic by Jean-Claude Forest, the movie was overseen by prolific Italian producer Dino De Laurentiis, whose name adorns a few of the greatest films of the postwar era (e.g., Federico Fellini's *La Strada* and *Nights of Cabiria*), as well as many of the trashiest. Among the authors of the script was Terry Southern, profligate bad boy of American letters and one of the film era's great pens for hire (*Dr. Strangelove* and *Easy Rider* are among his credits). Claude Renoir, nephew of a French film god, was a cinematographer. The jet-set cast includes such international stars as Ugo Tognazzi and David Hemmings, with Italian-German model (and Keith Richards consort) Anita Pallenberg playing an intergalactic dominatrix. World-famous mime Marcel Marceau is also in the movie. Hey, why not?

The original *Barbarella* landed in theaters on October 10, 1968.

But above all, *Barbarella* is Vadim and Fonda—director and star and,

at the time, husband and wife. Their marriage suggests a Henry James novel with a few modern kinks: An ambitious but somewhat naive American girl of moderate fortune and excellent pedigree falls under the spell of a cynical European adventurer who opens her eyes and ruins her life. Vadim, who had been married to Brigitte Bardot and had a child with Catherine Deneuve before he took up with Fonda, gambled away her inheritance, brought home call girls for impromptu threesomes and disappeared on epic binges. "Vadim was the first man I had ever loved," Fonda writes in her 2005 memoir, *My Life So Far.* "I could write one version of my marriage to Vadim in which he would come across as a cruel, misogynistic, irresponsible wastrel. I could also write him as the most charming, lyrical, poetic, tender of men. Both versions would be true."

It is also probably true that Vadim was better at seducing actresses than at making movies. Nonetheless, *Barbarella* belongs on any roster of the decade's distinctive and durable artifacts—and not only because its hectic production could generate a sentence like the following, also from Fonda's memoir: "One evening during a dinner party there was a loud noise, some plaster fell from the ceiling, and an owl fell onto Gore Vidal's plate." What I would not give to see that on YouTube.

Barbarella's charm lies in its goofy, sexy and affectionate spirit. Its heroine starts out in a world that has banished violence and sexual inhibition—hence the striptease, which is prelude to a conversation with the president. In this utopian regime, where "neurotic irresponsibility" is a thing of the past, erotic "reciprocity" is achieved by taking a pill and touching hands with a partner. It is only when Barbarella travels to the distant planet of Tau Ceti, in search of a renegade inventor named Durand-Durand and his Positronic Ray, that she is initiated into more strenuous forms of intimacy. Her first encounter is with a bounty hunter whose pectoral toupee is a wonder of neoprimitive manscaping, and her most meaningful relationship is with a depressive, flightless angel named Pygar, who regains the use of his wings after making love with her.

"She's the only comedienne I can think of who is sexiest when she is funniest," Pauline Kael wrote about Fonda. This mixture of playfulness and lust lifts *Barbarella* out of the realm of exploitation into something much stranger and more fun. In the context of Fonda's career, *Barbarella* is an oddity. (As her relationship with Vadim waned, she went on to reveal her strength as an actress, winning Oscars for *Klute* and *Coming Home;* legend has it she turned down roles in *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Rosemary's Baby* to play the space vixen.) And it is also an anomaly in the annals of cinematic science fiction, which has, for the most part, followed in the earnest, allegorical, sexless footsteps of *2001.* But Barbarella herself endures—as an early action heroine, as a space-age sex symbol and above all as a reminder that the role of humanity in the cosmos is not to take ourselves too seriously.

Our friends on other planets need to know this about us. We come in peace, with tongue in cheek and lots of cleavage.

The preferred attire in space: rocket bracelets, snug helmet and a pair of silver pumps.

Barbarella's mix of playfulness and lust lifts it out of the realm of exploitation into something much more fun.

See more *Barbarella* at
club.playboy.com.

Carcassonne

Fiction by Julian Barnes

LOVE IS SOMETIMES AS EXOTIC

as a place whose name you can't pronounce.

SOMETIMES IT'S BREATHTAKINGLY SIMPLE

IN THE SUMMER OF 1839, a man puts a telescope to his eye and inspects the Brazilian coastal town of Laguna. He is a foreign guerrilla leader whose recent success has brought the surrender of the imperial fleet. The liberator is on board its captured flagship, a seven-gun topsail schooner called the *Itaparica,* now at anchor in the lagoon from which the town gets its name. The telescope offers a view of a hilly quarter known as the Barra, containing a few simple but picturesque buildings. Outside one of them sits a woman. At the sight of her, the man, as he later put it, "forthwith gave orders for the boat to be got out, as I wished to go ashore."

Anita Riberas was 18, of mixed Portuguese and Indian descent, with dark hair, large breasts, "a virile carriage and

ILLUSTRATION BY JULIEN PACAUD

determined face." She would have known the guerrilla's name, since he had helped free her native town. But his search for both the young woman and her house was in vain, until he chanced upon a shopkeeper of his acquaintance who invited him in for coffee. And there, as if waiting for him, she was. "We both remained enraptured and silent, gazing on one another like two people who meet not for the first time, and seek in each other's faces something which makes it easier to recall the forgotten past." That's how he put it, many years later, in his autobiography, where he mentions an additional reason for their enraptured silence: He had very little Portuguese, and she no Italian. So he spoke his eventual greeting in his own language: "*Tu devi esser mia*." You must be mine. His words transcended the problem of immediate understanding: "I had formed a tie, pronounced a decree, which death alone could annul."

Is there a more romantic encounter than this? And since Garibaldi was one of the last romantic heroes of European history, let's not quibble over circumstantial detail. For instance, he must have been able to speak passable Portuguese, since he'd been fighting in Brazil for years; for instance, Anita, despite her age, was no shy maiden but a woman already married for several years to a local cobbler. Let's also forget about a husband's heart and a family's honor, about whether violence occurred or money was exchanged when, a few nights later, Garibaldi came ashore and carried Anita off. Instead, let's just agree that it was what both parties deeply and instantly desired, and that in places and times where justice is approximate, possession is usually nine points of the law.

They were married in Montevideo three years later, having heard reports that the cobbler might be dead. According to the historian G.M. Trevelyan, they "spent their honeymoon in amphibious warfare along the coast and in the lagoons, fighting at close quarters against desperate odds." As good on a horse as he, and as brave, she was his companion in war and marriage for 10 years; to his troops she was mascot, invigorator, nurse. The birth of four children did not impede her devotion to the republican cause, first in Brazil, then Uruguay and, finally, Europe. She was with Garibaldi in the defense of the Roman Republic and, after its defeat, in his retreat across the Papal States to the Adriatic coast. During their flight she fell mortally ill. Garibaldi, though urged to flee by himself, stayed with his wife; together they dodged the Austrian whitecoats in the marshes around Ravenna. In her final days, Anita held resolutely to "the undogmatic religion of her husband," a fact that draws from Trevelyan a tremendous romantic flourish: "Dying on the breast of Garibaldi, she needed no priest."

HE SPOKE HIS GREETING IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE: "TU DEVI ESSER MIA."

YOU MUST BE MINE.

•

Some years ago, at a booksellers' conference in Glasgow, I found myself talking to two Australian women, a novelist and a cook. Or rather, listening, since they were discussing the effect of different foods on the taste of a man's sperm. "Cinnamon," said the novelist knowingly. "No, not just by itself," replied the cook. "You need strawberries, blackberries and cinnamon; that's the best." She added that she could always tell a meat eater. "Believe me, I know. I did a blind tasting once." Hesitant about contributing to the conversation, I mentioned asparagus. "Yes," replied the cook. "It shows in the urine, but it also shows in the ejaculate." If I hadn't written the exchange down shortly afterward, I might think I was remembering part of some hot dream.

•

A psychiatrist friend of mine maintains that there is a direct correlation between interest in food and interest in sex. The lustful gourmand is almost a cliché, while aversion to food is often accompanied by erotic indifference. As for the normal, middle part of the spectrum: I can think of people who, because of the circles in which they move, exaggerate their interest in food; often, they are the same sort of people who (again, because of peer pressure) might claim more of an interest in sex than they actually feel. Counterexamples come to mind: couples whose appetite for food, and cooking, and eating out, has come to supplant the appetite for sex, and for whom bed, after a meal, is a place of repose, not activity. But on the whole, I'd say there's something to this theory.

•

The expectation of an experience governs and distorts the experience itself. I may not know anything about sperm tasting, but I know about wine tasting. If someone puts a glass of wine in front of you, it is impossible to approach it without preconceptions. To begin with, you might not actually like the stuff. But allowing that you do, then many subliminal factors come into play before you've even taken a sip. What color the wine is, what it smells like, what glass it is in, how much it costs, who's paying for it, where you are, what your mood is, whether or not you've had this wine before. It is impossible to factor out such preknowledge. The only way to get round it is an extreme one. If you are blindfolded, and someone puts a clothes-peg on your nose and hands you a glass of wine, then, even if you are the greatest expert in the world, you will be unable to tell *(continued on page 114)*

"The men I go out with talk too much. Now my husband knows I'm not frigid."

PLAYBOY'S TOP PARTY SCHOOLS 2011

IN the spirit of academia, we put serious homework into our party schools list. We gather info from thousands of students through our Playboy on-campus Facebook pages, survey our student reps at schools across North America and interview countless others. We draw up stats (male-female ratio, winning percentage of sports teams, etc.) and add bonus points for schools in the vicinity of beaches, ski slopes and music scenes. And as always, we factor in academic excellence, because the work hard, play hard ethic is the DNA of any party school. Shall we matriculate?

#1 University of Colorado, Boulder

CU-Boulder is home to reefer madness. Not only does Boulder have 50 medical-marijuana dispensaries within its city limits, but every April nearly half the university's 24,000-plus undergrads turn out for the annual 4/20 smoke-out on school grounds. Boulder is also a beer drinker's paradise, with four breweries in town. "There are a lot of distractions from school—snowboarding, mountain biking, superhot girls," says one alum. Literally dozens of world-class ski resorts are a drive away. "You know Boulder is a party school because whenever you tell someone that you went there, the first thing they ask is, 'Did you graduate?'"

#2 PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In addition to its formidable football legacy, this "public ivy" has formidable thirst. Take for example the aplomb with which Penn State celebrates St. Patrick's Day: Students and local bar owners fete the day of drinking one week early. "It falls during spring break, so we do it ahead of schedule," a student explains. "The bars open in the morning, and green beer flows." Penn State students don't let anything stand in the way of an alcohol-soaked holiday—not even an alcohol-soaked vacation.

#3 ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Sun Devils live up to their name. Thanks to Tempe's toasty climate, there's always a wealth of exposed skin at ASU. "Only in Arizona can you have outrageous pool parties in February," says a senior. At night students head to Tempe's bar-hopping nirvana, the Mill Avenue District. Plus, we give props to a school that turned streaking into a yearly tradition. Every spring ASU holds the Undie Run, a charitable event in which thousands of students strip and run around campus. Did we mention that Nick Nolte is an alum?

#4 UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

More than 20,000 undergrads enjoy a drinking age of 19 at this London, Ontario school. The bar scene is kicking. On Tuesdays students cram into Ceeps to play Sledgehammer Bingo, which is basically an excuse to strip and drink (as if one were needed), and both St. Patrick's Day and Halloween are monumental occasions as well. The on-campus scene is just as lively. One of the school's dorms became so notorious for partying it was nicknamed the Zoo.

#5 UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Even if UT Austin didn't have a top-notch football team and an inordinately attractive female student body, it would still make our list. Why? Because it's located in one of the coolest cities in the country. Austin is known for its stellar nightlife and music scene, and last year it was dubbed the third best city for singles. As one student sums up, "Austin is the music capital of the U.S. and a blue dot in a sea of red." Don't mess with Texas.

#6 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

In Badgerland the beer flows freely, there's always a sports team to toast and every night offers an array of things to do. Even winter can't squelch that feisty Badger spirit; Madison's frosty temps give students one more reason to imbibe and cozy up to a warm body. And then there are the epic weekend-long parties—Halloween and the Mifflin Street Block Party being the two standout events. Past celebrations got so big, riots broke out.

#7 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Football, sorority girls and drinking are the pillars of SEC life, and UGA reps all three with gusto. In downtown Athens, dozens of bars are crammed into a two-block radius—so no matter what your definition of an ideal Friday night, you're guaranteed to find something to your liking. The music scene is hopping, the restaurants are first-rate, and thanks to the full rides provided to in-state students by Georgia's Hope Scholarship, the school is brimming with Southern belles.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: THE MIFFLIN STREET BLOCK PARTY; THE CUERVO GAMES IN AUSTIN; PENN STATE'S MASCOT GETS CARRIED AWAY.

#8 UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

UT Knoxville's powerhouse basketball team plays in the largest on-campus single-sport arena in the U.S., and its outstanding football team clashes in the fourth-largest nonracing stadium in the nation. Plus, this is the only school we know of with its own fraternity boxing tournament—a spring event that occurs amid a weeklong party and draws students from all over. To top it off, a strip of bars runs through campus. Now that's Southern hospitality.

#9 UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

When you put 56,000 college students 20 minutes from downtown Orlando, you end up with an explosive mix of sun, sand and girls. UCF's campus is well appointed (the dorms are akin to hotels), and though the school's football team is unexceptional, prodigious tailgating makes up for any lack of athletic prowess. UCF students even get a discount on Universal Studios tickets. Sage advice from one student: "Never ride the Hulk drunk." Duly noted.

#10 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

A difficult school to get into (entering freshmen have an average GPA of 3.98), UCSB counts five Nobel Prize winners on its faculty. It's also perched on prime beachfront property. Every weekend students swarm to parties on Del Playa Drive, and in the spring there's Floatopia, a drink fest during which students lazily raft along the coast. After Floatopia 2009 drew 12,000 people, authorities put the kibosh on last year's event; however, as of press time, students were investigating a legal loophole in hopes of organizing "Rowtopia 2011."

CLASS ACT

The best (and worst) of everything on campus this spring

COOLEST FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN: Jay-Z for Commencement Speaker 2011, Middlebury College. **MOST COVETED DORM ROOM:** Suite H33 in Kirkland House, Harvard, where Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook. **BEST LATE-NIGHT EATS:** Capicola-and-cheese sandwich from Primanti Brothers, just off the Pitt campus, with built-in french fries, fried egg and mound of coleslaw. **BEST NAKED PARTIES:** Yale (seriously). **COOLEST COURSE:** University of California, Berkeley's "The Sociology of Seinfeld." **MOST DELICIOUS MASCOT:** (Tie) Delta State's Fighting Okra and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts' Fighting Pickles. **BEST COLLEGE SPORTS FAN:** Wild Bill of Utah State. **BEST LIBRARY:** The Library Café and Bar, University of Wisconsin, Madison. **BEST OUT-OF-THE-WAY PARTY SCHOOL:** Montana State University. **COOLEST RADIO STATION:** DePauw's WGRE 91.5. **THIRSTIEST MAJOR:** University of California, Davis's viticulture (grape cultivation) and enology (wine study).

HOTTEST STUDENT BODY: Mississippi State's Taylor Corley, cheerleader and Playboy model.

BASKETBALL COACH WE'RE MEASURING FOR A STRAITJACKET: Kansas State's Frank Martin. **NEW DRINK ON CAMPUS:** 40-proof Adult Chocolate Milk. **HOTTEST SORORITY:** San Diego State's Alpha Phi. **BEST COLLEGE SPORTS BAR:** The Swamp Restaurant in Gainesville, Florida. **WORST COLLEGE**

RAPPER: Chet Haze of Northwestern (Tom Hanks's son—YouTube him). **MOST LUCRATIVE ONLINE DEGREE:** None. **WALLET DRAINER:** Sarah Lawrence, the most expensive college in America ($57,556/year).

SOCRATES'S PUBLICIST

BY DEMETRI MARTIN

DEATH: THE ULTIMATE CAREER MOVE.

EXCLUSIVE NEW HUMOR FROM THE HARDEST WORKING MAN ON COMEDY CENTRAL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT WAGEMANN

Socrates had been working on and off as a philosopher for years without much success. He could barely pay his rent and was often not even sure if his place existed, both philosophically and because of its lousy square footage. He had found some moderate success as a freelance thinker, getting hired from time to time to ponder for an aristocrat or to ruminate for an idiot, but such opportunities were sporadic and never paid very well. His career was in trouble.

The truth was that, aside from thinking, Socrates possessed no marketable skills. And while he was pretty good at making small talk, that would not become a paid profession for another 2,000 years, and even then only on late-night television.

As far as work experience was concerned, Socrates had very little. He had worked in a Greek restaurant as a young man but was fired after customers complained about the "annoying waiter" who had pestered customers with "difficult questions" about their orders.

Sometime later Socrates's cousin managed to get him a job as a tour guide, but the struggling philosopher's whole "I know nothing" shtick did not fly with the tour company, and Socrates was fired after only one day on the job. To supplement his income, Socrates resorted to doing odd jobs for people in the neighborhood, mostly as a handyman. Now well into middle age, he was facing the very real possibility that he might never succeed. But fate would intervene, as it so often did in ancient Greece, giving Socrates a real shot at stardom.

As it turned out, Athens was fast becoming a hotbed of thinking, and the timing could not have been better for the aging philosopher-handyman.

It had all started a few months earlier when notions began flooding into Greece from Phoenicia by way of the merchant brooding class. When some of the more obsessive Greeks got hold of these notions, they turned them into full-fledged thoughts. Soon people began thinking in groups, and these thinking groups became "schools of thought." And that's when things really started to pick up.

First came the Sophists, a group of thinkers who used the tools of rhetoric to teach virtue. Then came the Rationalists. They specialized in using reason to uncover fundamental truths. Shortly after that, a third group emerged, who would prove to be more influential, and considerably more irritating, than any other group in Athens. They called themselves the Publicists.

The Publicists were, by far, the least thoughtful of all the new Athenian schools. They thought much less about Truth or Reason and much more about themselves. Still, the Publicists quickly became the most talked about school in all of Greece. This was due, in no small part, to their practice of talking about themselves even more than they thought about themselves.

While the Sophists sought *arete* (virtuous excellence), the Publicists sought *me-rete* (shameless self-promotion). And where the Rationalists employed logic, the Publicists used gossip, which was becoming even more popular than democracy among Greece's new It crowd.

The Publicists, realizing that they had very little thinking of their own to contribute, had cultivated a rhetorical method that enabled them to simply attach themselves to other thinkers. They practiced what scholars call "irrational indispensability." It is a means by which one person places himself into another person's business and then convinces that person, or "client," that he needs to pay him for it.

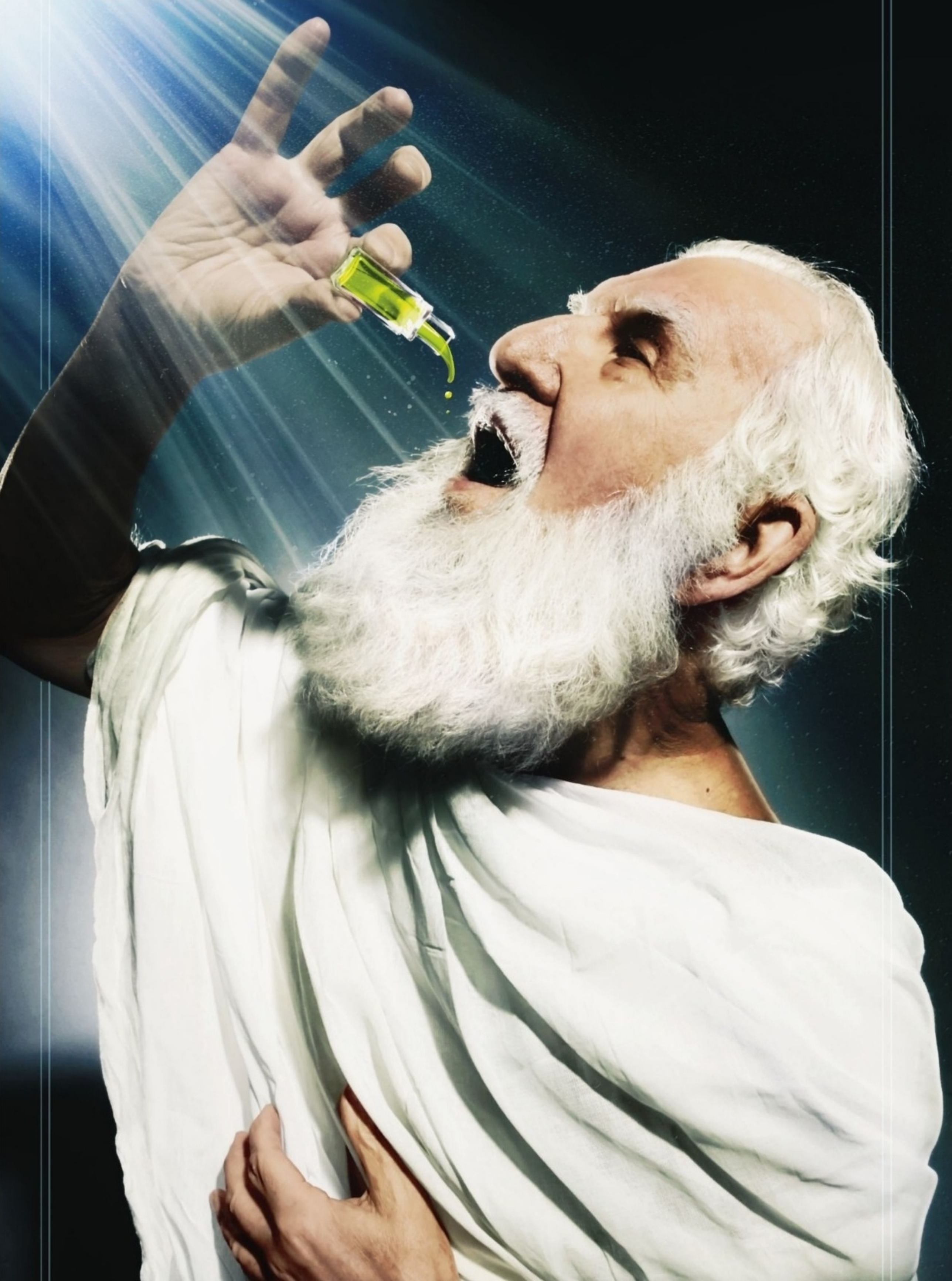
One day, while he was having lunch with his agent, Socrates met one of the Publicists. This Publicist, whose name is not known to history—though some scholars believe she was called "Jackie"—had become one of the most powerful Publicists in all of Athens.

Jackie approached Socrates as he was pondering his kebab. She told him that she was a "big fan." Socrates, still chewing, was flattered.

"Why don't we do lunch?" said Jackie.

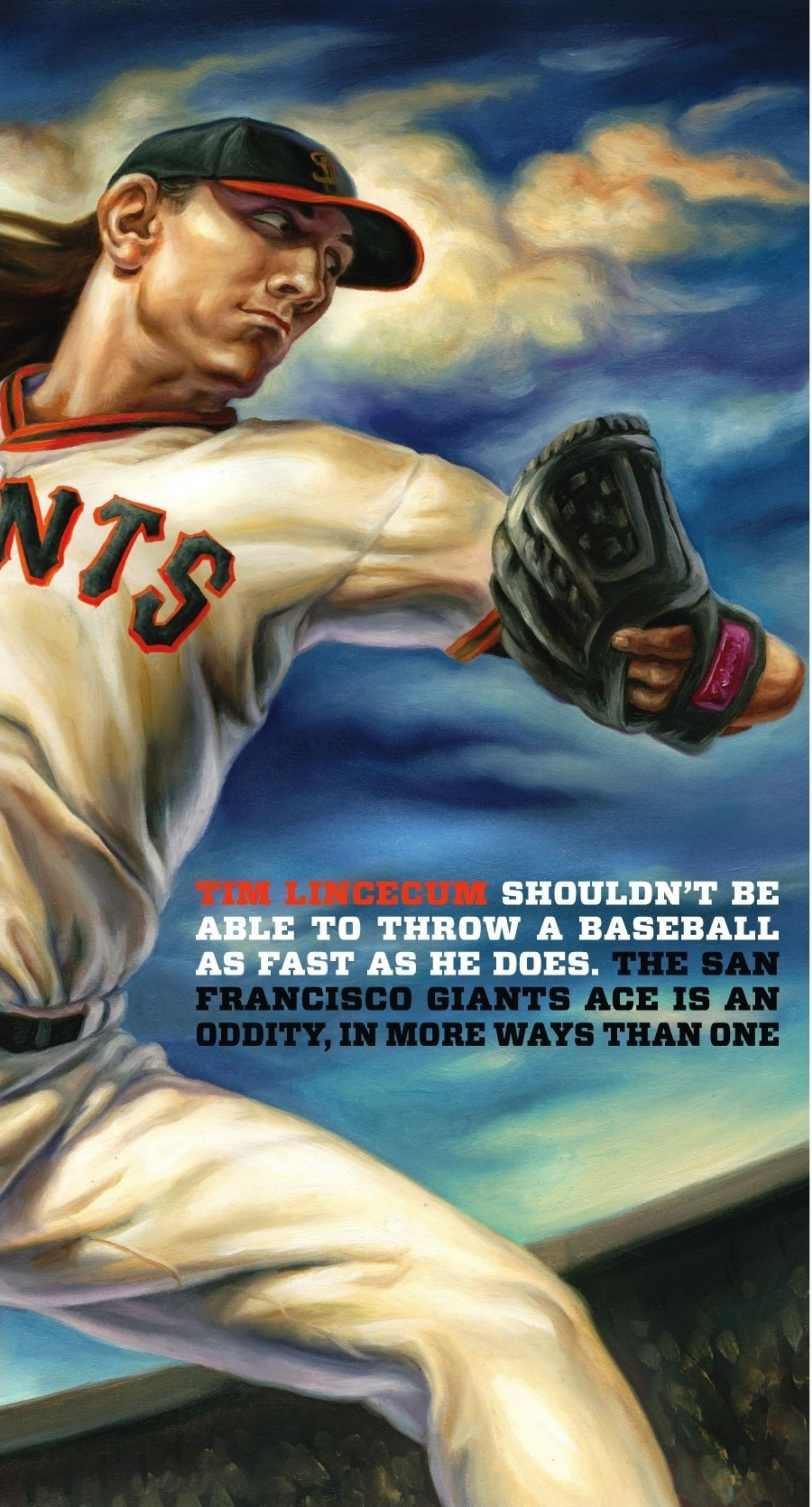
"'Do lunch'?" replied Socrates. "But a person can only 'eat' lunch, no?"

"Well, only *(continued on page 111)*



the FREAK

by Kevin Cook



It was crunch time. The pennant drive. The dog days. All those clichés. "And I was pitching like a jackass," says Tim Lincecum, who hates clichés more than line drives up the middle. Last summer, for the first time in his pro career, he was serving up extra-base rips and losing five straight games as the San Francisco Giants fell further behind the San Diego Padres in the NL West. "So they called us into a meeting." General manager Brian Sabean, manager Bruce Bochy, pitching coach Dave Righetti and the team's hurlers gathered in a conference room at AT&T Park. The timing was no coincidence: Lincecum had just lost again.

"It was like getting called into the principal's office."

The two-time Cy Young Award winner—the only pitcher to win the award in his first two full seasons—had gone 0–5 with a 7.82 ERA in August. Some people thought the slump was his fault. He'd been busted in the offseason with 3.3 grams of pot in his car. "The weed bust had people questioning my work ethic. Was I some jerk who didn't care?" In fact, the 26-year-old Lincecum's troubles had more to do with his new catcher. The Giants had started 2010 with 35-year-old Bengie Molina behind the plate. In July they replaced Molina with rookie Buster Posey. The switch messed with Lincecum's head. "I didn't adapt to Buster as fast as I should have," he says. "I was shaking him off, worrying about my rhythm, worrying my fastball was losing its speed." And for a guy who relies on flow and rhythm, "worried is no way to pitch."

So he quit worrying. "That meeting lit a fire under my butt." He found his rhythm with Posey by throwing what the kid (nearly three years

ILLUSTRATION BY OWEN SMITH

younger than Lincecum) called—the four-seam fastball that tops out at 97 mph, the low-90s sinker, the wicked curve, slider and changeup. He won five times in September, wound up leading the league in strikeouts for the third straight time and led the Giants to their first World Series title since they were the New York Giants. All Lincecum did in the postseason was go 4–1 with a 2.43 ERA, including a Series-clinching 10-strikeout gem against the Rangers.

Tim Lincecum at work during the 2010 postseason: The Freak's long pitching stride—taught to him by his father—provides him phenomenal power.

"Now we gotta do it again," he says. He'll start at Dodger Stadium on opening day, but the showdown everybody wants to see comes in July, when the Giants face the pitching-rich Phillies in a rematch of last year's National League Championship Series. "People talk about their pitchers, but we're the champs, not them. They've got to keep up with us."

It's a long way from Liberty Field in Renton, Washington, where he failed to make varsity as a freshman, largely because he stood four-foot-11 and weighed 86 pounds. He didn't make it as a sophomore, either, largely because he'd added only 14 pounds to a frame that was now five-foot-two. His dad, who worked for Boeing, engineered a weight-training plan to build Tim's core strength and taught him to pitch with an extra-long stride—two feet longer than usual—that helped him use his whole body to catapult the ball to the plate. Once the boy grew into the stride that got him nicknamed the Freak, he mowed down hitters for Liberty High, the University of Washington and an elite amateur team, the Seattle Studs. The Studs were less successful with baseball groupies—commonly called the beef—than you might think. Lincecum blames the uniforms, which had a baseball emblem covering the *u* in *Studs*. "It looked like we were the STDs."

Drafted by the Giants in 2006, he shot through the minors—where players *(continued on page 112)*

PLAYBOY'S 2011 *Baseball* PREVIEW

PREDICTIONS FOR THE 2011 SEASON

BY TRACY RINGOLSBY

BACK TO BACK

THE SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS are armed to repeat as World Series champions, though the odds are against them. No team has won back-to-back championships in the past decade. The Yankees ran off three titles from 1998 to 2000, but the only NL team to win back-to-back titles since the 1921–1922 New York Giants was Cincinnati, in 1975–1976. Ten of the 16 NL teams have advanced to the World Series in the past 13 years. Since the advent of a third round of playoffs in 1995, some have questioned the demands the postseason puts on pitching. Maybe teams don't repeat because arms become wearied in the postseason.

TRIPLE YOUR PLEASURE

Carlos Gonzalez of Colorado, Albert Pujols of St. Louis and Joey Votto of Cincinnati went into the final weeks of last season with a shot at the NL Triple Crown. None of them claimed it, however. The Triple Crown has been won only 13 times in modern history. Carl Yastrzemski won it most recently, in 1967. The NL hasn't had a Triple Crown winner since Joe Medwick with the 1937 St. Louis Cardinals. All four of the NL Triple Crowns and seven of the nine AL Triple Crowns were won when each league had only eight teams. The two most recent AL wins—by Frank Robinson with Baltimore in 1966 and Yastrzemski the following year—came when the AL had 10 members. What's more, in 1973 the AL added the designated hitter to each of its 14 lineups, thereby increasing the number of players whose only purpose is to have an offensive impact.

FEELING A DRAFT

It was an off-season of roster reshaping in Tampa Bay. The future remains bright for the Rays, though. They have one of the best scouting and player development departments in baseball. It's how they built the team that, despite having about one third of the Yankees' payroll, has been able to hold its own in the AL East. Aside from the off-season trades of starting pitcher Matt Garza and shortstop Jason Bartlett, the Rays witnessed a free-agent migration that resulted in the loss of outfielders Carl Crawford and Brad Hawpe, closer Rafael Soriano, relievers Chad Qualls, Grant Balfour, Randy Choate and Joaquin Benoit and first baseman Carlos Peña. But the Rays have 12 of the first 89 selections in the June draft—their own, which will be numbers 32 and 89 overall, plus 10 compensation picks. The team's other picks include Boston's first-round selection (24th overall) for Crawford, eight sandwich picks and Oakland's second-round pick (number 75) for Balfour. The 12 players selected in the same spots of the 2010 draft received $11 million in signing bonuses. Factor in inflation and the Rays could spend more in signing players out of the first two rounds of the 2011 draft than any team has ever spent on an entire draft.

Roy Halladay (1) mows down hitters. Will Albert Pujols (2) stay in St. Louis? Zack Greinke (3) makes Milwaukee dangerous.

WIN OR ELSE

In a division that underscores parity, Milwaukee Brewers GM Doug Melvin dealt his team into the role of NL Central favorite during the off-season. First he acquired pitcher Shaun Marcum from Toronto and then Zack Greinke from Kansas City. The moves came at a price. Four of the players traded were among the Brewers' top 10 prospects. Brett Lawrie, the number two prize in the organization, was sent to Toronto for Marcum. Kansas City, meanwhile, gave up Greinke for a package that included shortstop Alcides Escobar, outfielder Lorenzo Cain and right-handers Jake Odorizzi and Jeremy Jeffress. The pressure is on Melvin to win this season, his

The Red Sox loaded up this past off-season, landing Adrian Gonzalez from the Padres.

2

4

5

6

The Phillies have a pitching rotation (4) for the ages. Joey Votto (5), 2010 MVP, leads the hit parade in Cincinnati. Josh Hamilton (6) makes the Rangers a team with a frighteningly powerful offense.

3

eighth on the job. Melvin made the move on Greinke after it became apparent the market he was hoping to develop for potential free-agent first baseman Prince Fielder never materialized. If the Brewers struggle, they can trade Fielder and possibly Greinke, who is signed through 2012, in July.

WELL ARMED

With the addition of Cliff Lee, the Phillies have a pitching staff that will leave lineups trembling. How does it rank among the best rotations ever? The 1954 Cleveland Indians had a rotation of Early Wynn, Mike Garcia, Bob Lemon, Art Houtteman and Bob Feller, who died this past December. The five Indians combined to start 147 of 156 games for the 111–43 Tribe. The team's five starters in 1954 were a combined 93–36 with a 2.86 ERA. Feller, Lemon and Wynn are enshrined in the Hall of Fame. Despite Cleveland's strong arms, the New York Giants swept the Indians in the 1954 World Series.

SHORT ARMED

The Twins are counting on closer Joe Nathan to return after he missed the 2010 season recovering from elbow surgery, but is that enough for another title run? The off-season saw the free-agent defections of right-handers Jesse Crain, Matt Guerrier, Jon Rauch and Clay Condrey and left-handers Brian Fuentes and Ron Mahay but saw no established relief additions.

TOP 30

(1) Philadelphia Phillies: Four aces win almost any hand.

(2) Boston Red Sox: These Sox have plenty of runs and are thankful for them.

(3) San Francisco Giants: The un-Moneyball team hits another jackpot.

(4) Colorado Rockies: Home is a hitter's haven, but arms are key.

(5) Milwaukee Brewers: GM Melvin bet his future on Greinke and Marcum.

(6) Cincinnati Reds: Putting doubters in their place.

(7) Los Angeles Dodgers: Court for McCourts denies dollars for Dodgers.

(8) Chicago White Sox: Ozzie and a postseason mike are made for each other.

(9) Tampa Bay Rays: No fans, no finances, but a quality plan.

(10) Atlanta Braves: Brave new world without Bobby Cox.

(11) New York Yankees: Money can't buy pitching or happiness.

(12) Texas Rangers: Trumped in bid to keep ace.

(13) Los Angeles Angels: No offense meant, none shown.

(14) Florida Marlins: Another year of good but far from good enough.

(15) Minnesota Twins: There's minimal relief in sight.

(16) St. Louis Cardinals: Bad shuffle of the deck to lose Wainwright for the year.

(17) Chicago Cubs: They have been losing so long they aren't even lovable.

(18) Detroit Tigers: *Ay caramba,* Cabrera.

(19) Toronto Blue Jays: Rebuilding Ricciardi's mess won't be quick.

(20) Oakland Athletics: This team is stuck in neutral.

(21) Baltimore Orioles: The Buck stops here, and the O's are better for it.

(22) New York Mets: Wilpon thought Madoff's investments were bad?

(23) Kansas City Royals: Help is on the way, but not for another year.

(24) Arizona Diamondbacks: Rebuilding began with the hiring of Kevin Towers.

(25) Cleveland Indians: Plenty of reservations about this group.

(26) Houston Astros: Houston, we have a problem, again.

(27) San Diego Padres: Prayers won't be enough.

(28) Pittsburgh Pirates: Ay, matey, what a mess.

(29) Seattle Mariners: Troubled waters lie ahead.

(30) Washington Nationals: Fancy curtains can't cover up faulty foundation.

AL MVP: **Carl Crawford**
AL CY YOUNG: **David Price**
AL MANAGER: **Joe Maddon**

NL MVP: **Troy Tulowitzki**
NL CY YOUNG: **Cole Hamels**
NL MANAGER: **Charlie Manuel**

AL EAST: **BOSTON**	NL EAST: **PHILADELPHIA**
AL CENTRAL: **CHICAGO**	NL CENTRAL: **MILWAUKEE**
AL WEST: **TEXAS**	NL WEST: **SAN FRANCISCO**
AL WILD CARD: **TAMPA BAY**	NL WILD CARD: **COLORADO**
AL PENNANT: **BOSTON**	NL PENNANT: **PHILADELPHIA**

WORLD SERIES CHAMPION: *Philadelphia*

The Perfect Touch

PUT YOURSELF IN MISS MAY'S HANDS

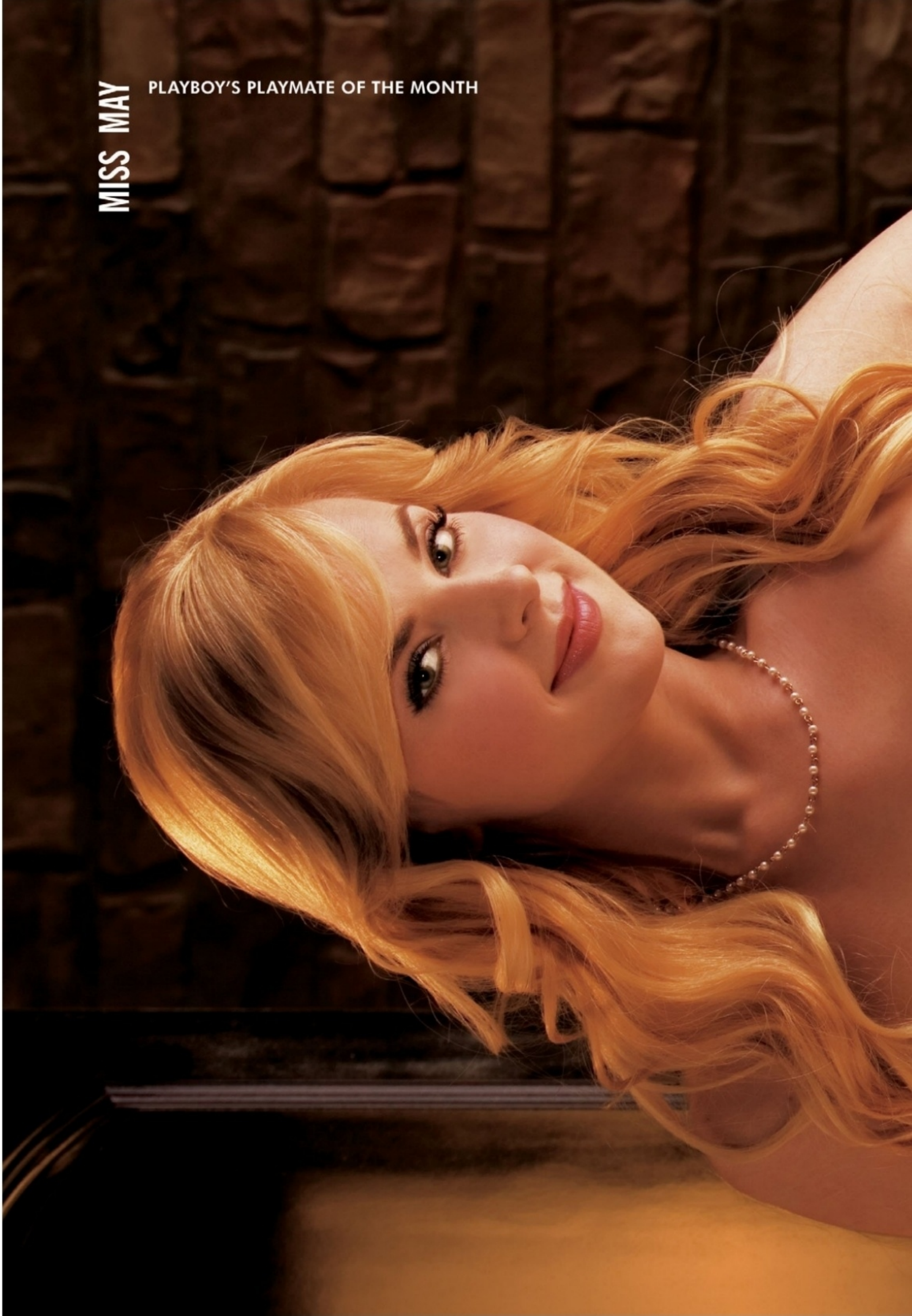
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

If you're ever lucky enough to find Sasha Bonilova in your home, don't be surprised if the voluptuous blonde quickly begins dropping decorating tips. "I'll probably start by suggesting you paint your rooms a new color," says our Miss May, who is working toward a degree in interior design at the Chicago-based Harrington College of Design. "Design is my passion. I'm also passionate about the school experience more generally. I always hope to learn about new things." Sasha grew up in western Ukraine, where she plucked fruit from the apple and cherry trees in her front yard and tinkered with Transformers. "Even though I studied dance and guitar, I was pretty much a tomboy," she says in her enchanting Ukrainian accent. (She speaks Ukrainian, Russian and English and is proficient in Polish and German as well.) Today that tomboy spirit still prevails; she loves to race around on her Yamaha sports bike, which is painted yellow and blue, the colors of the Ukrainian flag. By the age of 17, she and her traditional, tight-knit family, a collection of lawyers and teachers, had moved to Wisconsin. "I feel blessed to live in the United States because it truly is a country of opportunities. You can be anyone you want to be here if you have the talent and will to follow your dreams." After learning that PLAYBOY would not be staging any immediate casting calls in Chicago—our hometown and Sasha's adopted hometown—she followed her dream of becoming a Playmate to Denver. "The people at the casting laughed. They said, 'But you live in Chicago. What are you doing here in Denver?' I told them, 'That's how dedicated I am!'" As for her future, she says, "I expect a lot from myself this year. I see my job as promoting PLAYBOY and natural beauty to the best of my abilities. A lot of girls would die to be in my shoes right now, and I feel so blessed to have this opportunity."

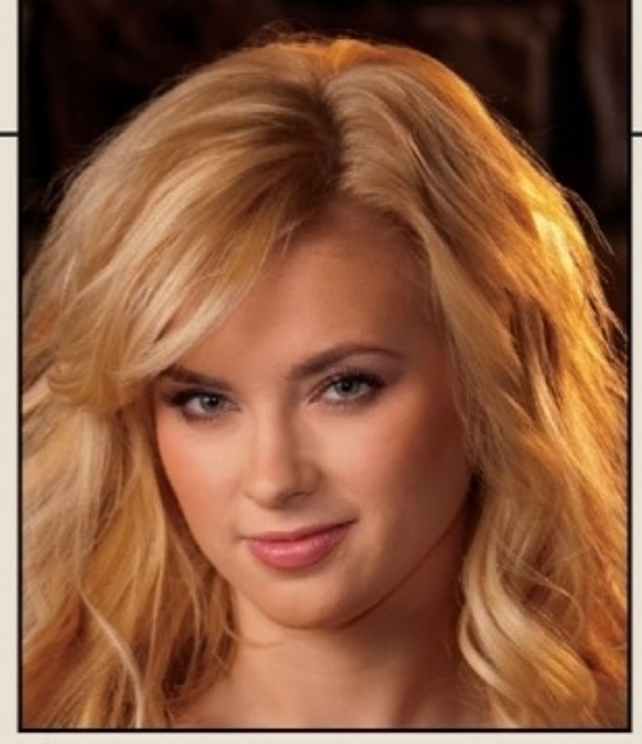
See more of Miss May
at club.playboy.com.

MISS MAY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Sasha Bouloza



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Sasha Bonilova

BUST: 36DD WAIST: 27 HIPS: 36

HEIGHT: 5'7" WEIGHT: 127

BIRTH DATE: 05/20/87 BIRTHPLACE: Lytsk, Ukraine

AMBITIONS: To be someone people look up to one day — Playmate of the Year would be great. ☺

TURN-ONS: A manly man who is successful and happy in what he does. I want to learn from you!

TURNOFFS: Close-minded guys who see only black and white. You must understand that there is a gray area. And a red and a green. Be creative!

MY FIRST AMERICAN PALS: The cast of Friends. I grew up with them just like you, but unlike you I heard them speaking Ukrainian.

MY FAVORITE WEAKNESS: A sensual body touch in an appropriate manner is the key to my private world.

WORDS TO LIVE BY: "It is not length of life but depth of life." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

A happy Sasha!

New Year's party.

First year of college.

Sasha Bautista

MISS MAY
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Why do men name their penises? Because they don't like the idea of having a stranger make 90 percent of their decisions.

A man who had just finished golfing with his buddies boarded a bus with one of his front pockets stuffed with golf balls. He sat down next to a beautiful blonde, and after a few minutes he noticed she kept staring at the bulge in his pants. Finally he said, "It's golf balls."

"Oh," she replied. "Does that hurt as much as tennis elbow?"

How do you find a blind man in a nudist colony? It's not hard.

One afternoon a maid told the lady of the house where she worked that she would like a raise. The woman was irritated by the maid's request and asked her why she felt she deserved a salary increase.

"Well, ma'am," the maid said, "there are three reasons I think I deserve a raise. The first is that I'm better at ironing than you."

"Who told you you're better at ironing than I am?" the woman asked.

"Your husband told me," the maid replied.

"I see," the woman responded, clearly annoyed.

The maid continued and said, "The second reason I think I deserve a raise is because I'm a better cook than you."

"Nonsense," the woman said. "Who said you're a better cook than I am?"

The maid replied, "Your husband."

"Fine," the woman said angrily. "What's your third justification?"

"My third reason for thinking I deserve a raise is that I'm better in bed than you," the maid answered.

Furious, the woman said, "Oh, and did my husband tell you that as well?"

"No, ma'am," the maid replied. "The gardener did."

"Oh," the wife said, getting out her checkbook. "So how much more did you say you wanted?"

One night a woman undressed in front of her husband and asked, "What turns you on more, my pretty face or my sexy body?"

The husband looked her up and down and said, "Your sense of humor."

A couple of friends were playing golf together one afternoon when one noticed that the other had been standing over his tee shot on the 450-yard 18th hole for what seemed like an eternity. The man adjusted his position, looked up, looked down and then adjusted his position again. Finally his exasperated partner asked, "What in the world is taking you so long?"

"My wife is watching me from the clubhouse balcony," the man explained. "I want to make a perfect shot."

"You're wasting your time," his friend replied. "You don't have a chance in hell of hitting her from here."

What is the difference between Bigfoot and an intelligent man? Bigfoot has been spotted several times.

A woman walked up to a clerk in her local drugstore and asked him to tell her where she could find AA batteries.

"Come this way," the clerk said, gesturing with two fingers.

"If I could come that way, I wouldn't need the batteries," the woman said.

A woman's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months, but she dutifully stayed by his bedside every single day. One afternoon he finally opened his eyes. When he did, he looked at his wife and said, "You've always been with me through the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you stayed with me, and when my health started failing, you were still by my side. So you know what?"

"What, dear?" his wife asked, smiling bravely.

"I think you're really bad luck," he said.

Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or by e-mail through our website at jokes.playboy.com.* PLAYBOY *will pay $100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.*

“I’m so clumsy, I don’t know why you keep me on…!”

PLAYBOY GOURMAND

RARE BEAUTY

BY A.J. BAIME

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLD'S MOST DECADENT MEAL

Unless you're a butcher, chef or cowboy, a lot of what you know about steak is probably wrong. The blood that drips onto your cutting board when you slice a rib eye? That's not blood. Steak comes from cow, right? Well, sort of. Myth and misunderstanding are woven into the fibers of red meat like the marbled fat that makes it sublime. Plus, beef has changed in recent years due to nuances in the meat industry, so the sirloin you ate as a kid is often not the same thing you eat today. In a quest to master man's most decadent meal, we sought answers from some of America's finest meat-loving chefs. Here's all you need to know, just in time for grilling season.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ZACHARY JAMES JOHNSTON

WHAT IS BEEF? As with sex, when you indulge in a steak, you ought to know its gender. Technically, cow is female. "What you're eating is steer," says Tom Colicchio, chef-owner of Craft, Craftsteak and Colicchio & Sons, five-time James Beard award winner and head judge on *Top Chef*. "Steers are castrated male cattle." Why do farmers cut their testicles off? "So they sit around and get fat," says Colicchio. "They can't fuck, so they eat and get fat." The more fat marbled into the meat, the richer its flavor.

HOW DO YOU COOK A STEAK? Here's the general process, as told by Michael Symon, the James Beard award–winning chef-owner of Lola and B Spot in Cleveland and Roast in Detroit: "Season it with kosher salt anywhere from six to 12 hours in advance. The salt permeates the protein and starts breaking down the cell structure, making the muscle more tender. Let the meat get to room temperature. I find that the best way to cook steak is over a charcoal grill, but you can use a cast-iron pan also. Rub a little olive oil on the steak and cook it over medium high. Once you put it down, let it char, about four to six minutes. Then flip it. To me, medium rare is perfect, so cook for another five to six minutes, depending on how thick the cut is. The biggest mistakes people make? They don't let the steak get to room temperature before they cook, and they move it around too much while it's cooking. Just set it down, let it develop a char, then flip it once."

WHAT IS PRIME BEEF, AS OPPOSED TO CHOICE AND SELECT? "A USDA inspector examines the carcass cut at the 13th rib," says Tim Love, chef-owner of the Lonesome Dove Western Bistro and the Love Shack in Fort Worth. "He instantly dictates the value of the meat by grading it prime—which is the best—choice or select." The key thing the inspector looks for is fat. The more fat marbled into the interior, the better the meat.

WHAT VINO BEST ACCOMPANIES STEAK? Bold reds with structure and tannins—cabernet, Bordeaux, amarone, Barolo—are best. Both Colicchio and David Burke, the man behind meat temples Primehouse in Chicago and David Burke Townhouse in New York, go for French pinot noir. "Give me a grand cru Burgundy and I'm happy," says Colicchio. Adds chef Symon, "I love funky beers; they're great with meat. There's a brewery called Jolly Pumpkin out of Michigan that makes an awesome beer aged in red-wine casks. It cuts through steak incredibly well."

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO LET STEAK SIT ON A CUTTING BOARD FOR 10 MINUTES AFTER YOU COOK IT? "When you cook a steak, the muscle tenses

A CUT Above

Fresh

SOME OF AMERICA'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED CARNIVORES DISH ON THEIR FAVORITE STEAKS

FILET

Filet mignon has always enjoyed the spotlight, but most chefs don't go for it. A slice off the tenderloin, it's lean and lacks richness. Says Michael Symon (James Beard award winner, chef-owner of Lola and B Spot in Cleveland and Roast in Detroit): "Wrap it in four pounds of bacon and stick it in the oven. That'll give it some flavor!"

SIRLOIN

From the French *surloigne*, meaning "above the loin" (it's actually part of the hip), the term *sirloin* covers the top sirloin, bottom sirloin and sirloin tip roast. All vary in terms of richness and cost. The top sirloin is the finest, so if you want a sirloin steak, ask for the top. The others are often chopped into stew meat or ground into hamburger.

PORTERHOUSE

This expensive cut is a bone-in steak that has the filet on one side and the strip on the other. If the filet is less than roughly 1.25 inches across, it's called a T-bone. What makes the porterhouse so decadent? The filet is lean, great for dipping in, say, a ramekin of bordelaise sauce, while the strip is full of rich fat, so it can go it alone.

SKIRT

Long, flat and full-flavored, this steak is cut from the steer's chest and should be served sliced. Mexicans put it in fajitas. The Chinese use it for stir-fry. David Burke (chef-owner of Primehouse in Chicago and David Burke Townhouse in New York) likes it on a grill—"with *chimichurri* sauce, beer and salad."

HANGER

"I love it so!" shouts Symon at the mention of the word *hanger*. "Grill it over charcoal and serve it with a salad with parsley, chilies, anchovies, capers and olive oil." A hanger is cut from the steer's diaphragm. It's sometimes called a butcher's steak because the butcher would take this cut home for himself. Serve it medium rare; it chews like a Bridgestone if overcooked.

RARE

NEW YORK STRIP

When we think New York strip, we think of Paul Castellano and his soldiers at Sparks Steak House, with old-school sides like creamed spinach and dry martinis to start—classic Gotham decadence. A strip is cut from the short loin, a muscle in the steer's back that doesn't do much work and so is richly marbled with fat. Thus it requires a full-bodied red—a Barolo or a Toro, perhaps.

TRI-TIP

A triangular muscle, tri-tip is part of the bottom sirloin. It used to be stew meat until a bunch of restaurants in Santa Maria, California made it popular by rubbing it with garlic salt and other seasonings and cooking it over red oak or smoking it in a pit. (Tri-tip is sometimes called Santa Maria steak.) When chef Symon uses tri-tip, he likes it "quick sautéed with wild mushrooms and ramps, deglazing the pan with red wine and finishing it with butter."

RIB EYE

The king of steaks. "The bone-in rib eye is my favorite," says Tom Colicchio (winner of five James Beard medals, chef-owner of Craft, Craftsteak and Colicchio & Sons). "It has the leaner meat in the center and the fattier flap meat on the outside." The steak is cut from the top of the rib, and it's as richly marbled as beef gets. How to serve? David Burke likes his "with soft French bread and butter, shoestring potatoes and a great bottle of wine."

HE MAKES "TEXAS CAVIAR" OUT OF BLACK-EYED PEAS.

WHEN WE THINK OF NEW YORK STRIP, WE THINK OF PAUL CASTELLANO AT SPARKS STEAK HOUSE.

up," says Love, "just like your finger would if you burned it. When you let it sit, the meat gets more tender." Adds Colicchio, "Cut a steak too soon after cooking and all the juices bleed onto the cutting board. If you let it rest, the juices move to the inside, adding to the flavor."

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORN-FED AND GRASS-FED BEEF? To echo the old saying, a steer is what it eats. Corn contains far more carbohydrates and calories than grass. "If you're looking for rich flavor and marbling, you have to go with corn fed," says Colicchio. "From a health standpoint, grass fed is better because it's leaner. The problem with corn is you have to give the animal antibiotics because it's not meant to eat corn. If you want antibiotic-free beef, go with grass fed."

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH GROWTH HORMONE? In the 1950s cattle farmers started injecting steers with steroids, and it has become common practice in America (though not in Europe). An animal that grows faster can be slaughtered younger, thus raising savings and profit. That said, younger cows don't marble with fat as fast. That's why, years ago, about 30 percent of beef was graded prime, while two to four percent is today.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A STEAK IS MEDIUM RARE? Use your finger against your hand to gauge the tenderness of the meat. It should feel like…

RARE:

PRESS WITH INDEX FINGER ON THE BASE OF THUMB.

MEDIUM:

PRESS CENTER OF THE PALM.

WELL DONE:

PRESS INSIDE EDGE OF THE HAND AT THE PINKIE KNUCKLE.

BLADES OF GLORY

Butchering time: The Sugimoto Chinese-style cleaver ($401) is for slicing meat. A Masamoto Garasuki ($280) cuts through bone as if it were butter (both carbon steel, korin.com).

WHAT'S KOBE BEEF? In the region of Kobe in Japan, farmers have raised a breed of cattle called Wagyu according to specific traditions that over centuries have produced beef so marbled, it's a delicacy. Most beef cattle in America are either Angus or Hereford. We have Wagyu, but not Wagyu that's been bred as it is in Kobe. "It's like sparkling wine in California," says Love. "It's not champagne unless it's from Champagne."

WHY AGE STEAK? In the dry-aging room at David Burke's Primehouse, steer carcasses mature like wine and cigars. The dry-aging process, explains Burke's executive sous-chef, Pedro Avila, tenderizes beef and removes moisture (which intensifies flavor). The beef crusts over on the outside as it begins to rot. This crust is cut off and discarded. Since so much of the beef is tossed, what remains becomes very expensive. "Thus the price on the menu," smiles Avila. A dry-aged steak spends a minimum of three weeks in the cooler and could spend as much as 50 days.

WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE TO BUY BEEF? Chefs swear by Niman Ranch (nimanranch.com), a consortium of farms where cattle are raised with no hormones or antibiotics and then butchered and even dry-aged. It's expensive, but as chef Colicchio advises, "Eat less and eat better."

ON THE SIDE

FOR OUR SPECIALS THIS EVENING, WE HAVE...

TIM LOVE'S GRILLED TOMATO AND SCALLION SALAD

At his Lonesome Dove bistro in Fort Worth, Tim Love douses classic Western cuisine with loads of nuance and garnishes it with a sense of humor. He makes "Texas caviar" out of black-eyed peas and jalapeños, rabbit and rattlesnake sausage and plenty of exotic game (elk, kangaroo). For a steak side or appetizer, he offers up a tangy grilled salad.

(SERVES FOUR)

4 VINE-RIPENED TOMATOES, CORED AND CUT INTO WEDGES
1 BUNCH SCALLIONS
CANOLA OIL
KOSHER SALT
FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
2 TBSP. FRESH LIME JUICE
⅛ CUP EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
1 CUP CRUMBLED COTIJA CHEESE

Light a grill. Rub tomatoes and scallions with canola oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill over high heat, turning once, until blistered. Chop scallions and dress veggies with lime, olive oil and cheese, and serve.

THE STRIP HOUSE'S CRISP GOOSE FAT POTATOES

These days you can buy goose fat on Amazon. The Strip House in New York is known for its goose fat potatoes. Here's the recipe, courtesy of owners Peter and Penny Glazier:

(SERVES FOUR)

HERB-INFUSED GOOSE FAT

¾ CUP MELTED GOOSE FAT
6 THYME STEMS, LEAVES CHOPPED AND RESERVED
2 ROSEMARY STEMS, LEAVES CHOPPED AND RESERVED
6 GARLIC CLOVES
1¾ TSP. KOSHER SALT
¾ TSP. FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

POTATOES

4 SPRIGS THYME
2 SPRIGS ROSEMARY
2 BAY LEAVES
3 LARGE IDAHO POTATOES, CUT INTO ¾-INCH PIECES
1 TBSP. KOSHER SALT
8 CUPS WATER

GARNISH

5 CLOVES THINLY SLICED GARLIC
COARSE SEA SALT
¼ CUP COARSELY CHOPPED PARSLEY

Goose fat: In a saucepan, combine goose fat, thyme and rosemary stems, garlic, one teaspoon kosher salt and ½ teaspoon ground pepper. Bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. When garlic browns (about 15 minutes), remove pan from heat and allow to steep for 10 minutes. Strain fat of solids. Reserve warm. **Potatoes:** Tie thyme, rosemary and bay leaves with twine. Put potatoes, herbs and salt into a pot with water. Bring to a boil and cook for 10 minutes. Drain, discard herbs and set aside (do not refrigerate). **Assemble:** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place potatoes in a large bowl and add the reserved chopped herb leaves (rosemary and thyme). Season with ¾ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon ground pepper. Gently mix potatoes while adding ⅓ cup of infused goose fat. (Some of the potatoes will break apart.) Tightly pack potatoes into a six-inch-diameter baking dish or skillet. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until crust is golden brown. Let cool, about 45 minutes, and refrigerate until ready to use. (Recipe may be prepared to this point one day ahead.) **To serve:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Invert potato cake onto a baking sheet, unmold and brush with remaining goose fat. Bake 40 minutes, basting frequently with goose fat. Transfer to a serving platter, and sprinkle with sliced garlic, coarse salt and chopped parsley.

Who does James O'Keefe think he is?

IS THE 26-YEAR-OLD RIGHT-WING AGITATOR WHO BROUGHT DOWN ACORN A RADICAL BOY WONDER OR SCOURGE OF MODERN POLITICS?

IT DEPENDS ON WHOM YOU ASK

BY **JORDAN LIEBERMAN**

It may be easier if we start with who you think James Edward O'Keefe III is. My guess is this will depend on your political persuasion and media diet. If you lean to the right and keep your television tuned to Fox News, O'Keefe is the YouTube generation's pre-eminent muckraker, willing to enter the dregs of the liberal establishment, hidden camera in tow, to expose its hypocrisy and show how *The New York Times* is a mouthpiece for its socialist agenda. But if *The New York Times* happens to be your paper of choice and MSNBC your preferred news channel, O'Keefe is a combination patsy, Watergate burglar and sexual predator.

Either way, you probably know O'Keefe best as a pimp. That's how I first heard of him. A little less than two years ago, friends at Andrew Breitbart's website, Big Government, told me a couple of 20-somethings (O'Keefe and Hannah Giles, a writer for Townhall.com) had orchestrated a hidden-camera sting on the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), a national community-organizing group. As part of the scheme, Giles, posing as a hooker, and O'Keefe, pretending to be her law-student boyfriend, visited ACORN offices around the country, asking for guidance on how to smuggle underage prostitutes into the country so they could use the profits to underwrite O'Keefe's fictional political ambitions. Instead of

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM O'BRIEN

turning them away, several ACORN employees instructed O'Keefe and Giles on how to account for their earnings on their income taxes. Once the footage—supplemented with a B-roll of O'Keefe dressed as a stereotypical pimp—was posted on Big Government, the public uproar helped tip ACORN into bankruptcy. "That 20-minute video ruined 40 years of good work," Sonja Merchant-Jones, former co-chair of ACORN's Maryland chapter, told *The New York Times*.

"This isn't your mother's *60 Minutes*," Breitbart proclaimed at the time. "Maybe James thinks baby boomer elites like Katie Couric, Charlie Gibson and Brian Williams could care less. Their generational zeitgeist—and the knowledge that their kids are personally immune from monster deficits—is all that matters. And they look the other way while believing all organizations on the left—no matter how extreme—are working toward their goals."

In the ensuing 18 months I have personally witnessed O'Keefe's rapid rise to Tea Party superstardom and subsequent excommunication. Although I didn't meet him until after the ACORN footage went live on Big Government, I know most of the people inside our small community of political consultants. I teach political technology at the Leadership Institute, a finishing school for Karl Rove types where O'Keefe once worked. Given that O'Keefe's generational zeitgeist encompasses Johnny Knoxville, social media and rabid distrust of the establishment, I consider him an ace performance artist–political shit stirrer–jackass. He is fearless, engaging and as paranoid as Richard Nixon. (I am convinced he furtively recorded all our meetings and conversations.)

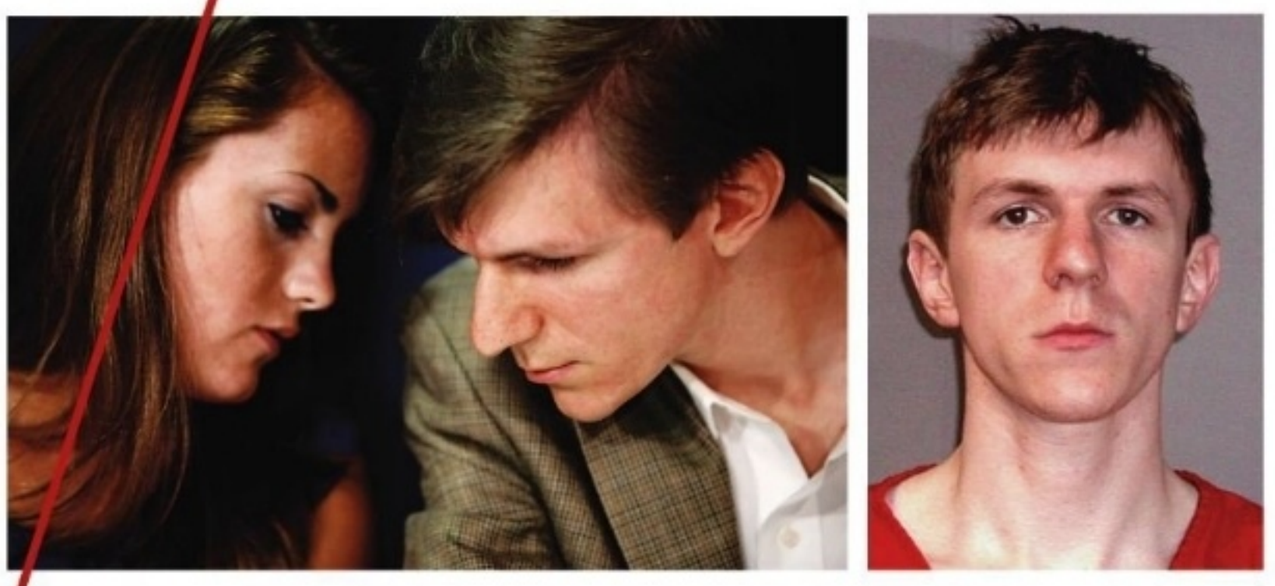
He also possesses awful judgment, which is why numerous former allies refuse to go on the record. These days they want nothing to do with O'Keefe. After ACORN, a series of embarrassing duds forced many O'Keefe advocates to distance themselves from him. In late January 2010 he attempted to tamper with Louisiana senator Mary Landrieu's phones, a high-risk, low-reward stunt that landed him in a New Orleans jail. Eight months later a ridiculous plan to seduce CNN reporter Abbie Boudreau aboard O'Keefe's sailboat unraveled at the last minute, and Breitbart cut him loose. "From what I've read, this script, though not executed, is patently gross and offensive," Breitbart scolded. "It's not his detractors to whom he owes this public airing, it's to his legion of supporters." O'Keefe claims his public banishment is bullshit and that his relationship with Breitbart has merely evolved. I'm not so sure.

Chronicling O'Keefe's life in detail is usually off-limits to anyone outside his tiny corner of political professionals and paranoid activists. "The mainstream media always has made the story about us—how much money it costs to do what we do and how other journalists perceive what we do," O'Keefe responded to my overtures for an interview. "Even in the most wildly successful case, when Congress was taking action after our videos, *The New York Times* wanted to profile me but not do a political story. My challenge is to get the media to cover the substance of what we do. Do you understand my burden and reluctance to do an interview with PLAYBOY?"

Ever since, he has sent me e-mails about how the *Times* and other mainstream media organizations are out to get him by covering his arrest on the front page but ignoring his successes. But because we inhabit the same circles, he eventually relented and let me into his world—albeit in his own uncomfortable way—so I could see if anyone really knows who he is.

WHO THOSE WHO KNEW HIM WHEN THINK HE IS

For insight into his teenage years, O'Keefe suggests I contact Lorraine Cella, a favorite teacher at Westwood High School in northeastern New Jersey. "What's he doing now?"



The highs and lows of a political prankster, from left: O'Keefe with Hannah Giles at a press conference at the National Press Club not long after their ACORN sting became public; his mug shot after attempting to mess with Senator Mary Landrieu's phones.

she responds via e-mail after my initial approach, his name long forgotten ("lots of students and lots of years gone by"). After I direct her to O'Keefe's Wikipedia entry, her memory of him becomes slightly less unmemorable. "He was quiet in my sophomore honors American literature class, but he was good with words on paper," she offers. "I have one of his poems in my student collection, *Fundamentals of War,* which he wrote as part of our war-antiwar poetry unit. And he was outstanding in [the school musical] *Crazy for You*. I remember thinking I had no idea he had performance talent. He was so introspective in my class. Frankly, I'm stunned to read about his activism." (His *Crazy for You* co-star adds, "In high school he couldn't look at you except when he was onstage. When performing, he was a completely different guy.") Later, Cella faxes me a copy of *Fundamentals of War.* In strained verse, O'Keefe is more peacenik poet than budding Young Republican: "And so the armies keep on filing and the bodies keep on piling/To find out who will be the king of this pure destructive force/When the end is coming near, we will thank the lord we're here/And we'll cease the stupid fighting that has plagued our race the most."

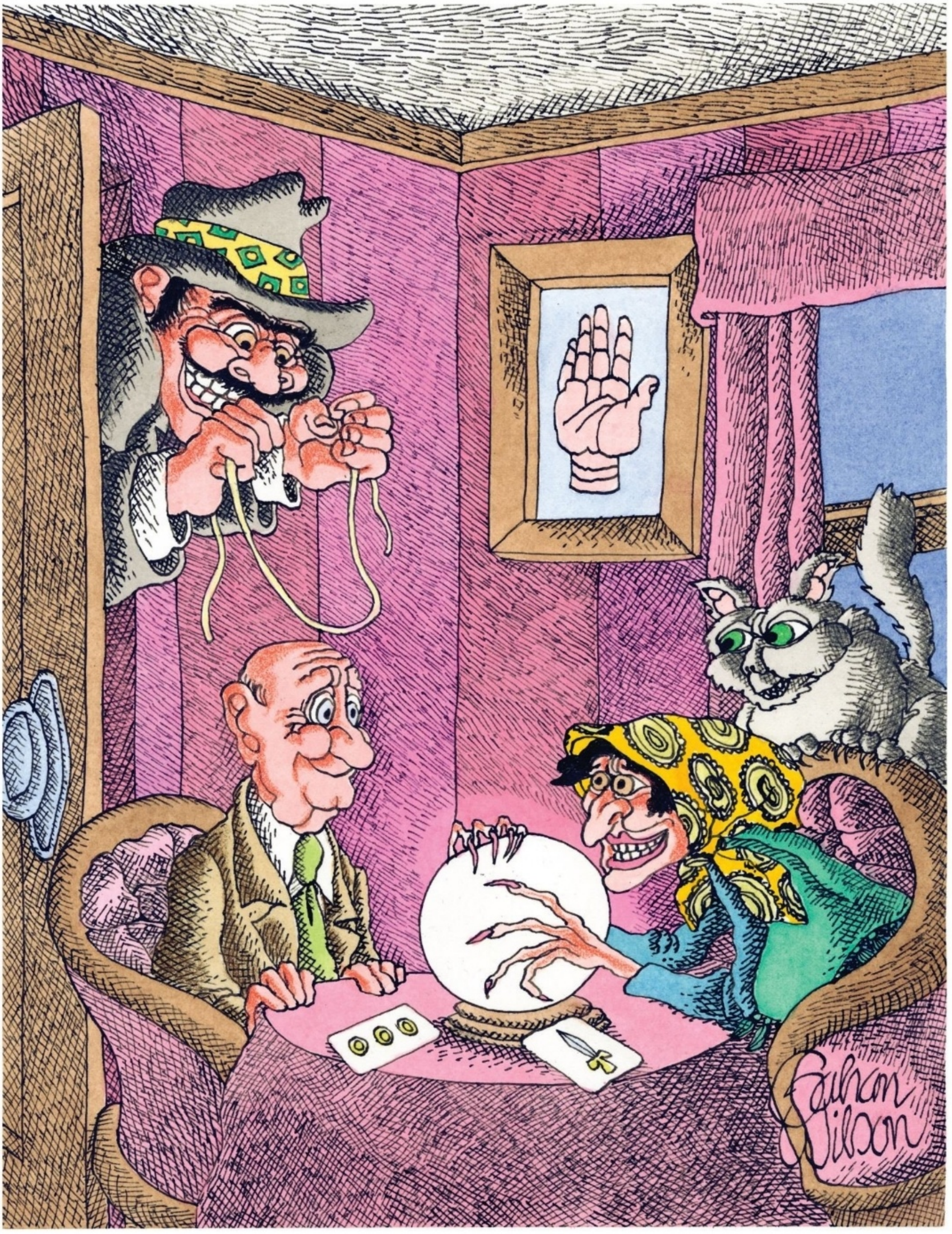
WHO O'KEEFE THINKS HE IS

"I want to make society more transparent and ethical," O'Keefe explains to me during our first proper interview, late last fall. "I hope someday to change the world by exposing unethical behavior." Originally we planned to gather near his parents' home in New Jersey, where he lives when he's not on the road collecting video footage or giving speeches. (It's not as pathetic as it sounds.) O'Keefe is particularly private about his living situation; he is also reluctant to discuss his family. His standard response: "I had a wonderful

I consider James O'Keefe an ace performance artist–political SHIT STIRRER–JACKASS.

upbringing, but my parents didn't have an impact on me politically." Ultimately, he provides me with just one other familial tidbit: "My father and grandfather are blue-collar workers who are good with their hands."

According to O'Keefe's friends, his dad is an engineer and his mom is a physical therapist. I believe his younger sister, his sole sibling, is an artist. They seem encouraging; his grandmother loaned him the fur coat he wore as part of his ACORN pimp plumage. "He's an extremely conscientious, hardworking young man, and we're proud of him," the elder O'Keefe told *The Star-Ledger* in September 2009, one *(continued on page 108)*



"Soon all of your troubles will be over!"

Former NFL cheerleaders Jaime and Cara sizzle on the small screen. The winner of this season's *Amazing Race* will be crowned this month.

HOT RIGHT NOW

THE AMAZING RACER

AROUND THE WORLD WITH MISS JANUARY 2010 JAIME EDMONDSON

Few people—and not one we can think of who's this exquisite—can claim a résumé as impressive as Jaime Faith Edmondson's: pistol-packing cop (Boca Raton, Florida police force), cheerleader for the Miami Dolphins, Playmate (Miss January 2010) and reality-TV star. In 2009 Jaime scored a second-place finish on season 14 of CBS's *Amazing Race.* This spring the network brought her and her teammate, fellow cheerleader-bombshell Cara Rosenthal, back for another trip around the globe, on *The Amazing Race: Unfinished Business.* And why not? Fearlessness and beauty make for good TV. Jaime's favorite thing about TV stardom? "Just the fact that I actually did it," she says. "I followed my dream of being on *The Amazing Race.* I'm a firm believer in the Eleanor Roosevelt quote 'The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.' "

20 ed h lms

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHIAS CLAMER

Q1

PLAYBOY: In your last few films you've been paired with actresses like Heather Graham, Sigourney Weaver, Anne Heche and, in this month's *The Hangover Part II*, Jamie Chung. That's a lot of on-screen sex with a lot of hot ladies. We never thought of you as such a stud.

HELMS: Wait, let's rewind for a second. There was no sex on-screen—or off, for that matter—with Heather Graham. There was implied sex, and we did have a nice kiss, which I'm still dizzy from. But we didn't actually have sex during the movie. Actually, I think Sigourney Weaver in *Cedar Rapids* was my first official sex scene. And if you don't mind my saying so, I think it will go down as one of the great sex scenes in the history of cinema.

Q2

PLAYBOY: When Sigourney was taking your movie-sex virginity, was she gentle with you?

HELMS: Oh, she was the greatest. She's so cool and such a seasoned pro. I was the anxious one. In any situation like that, there is a fear that—how can I put this delicately?—body parts might act on their own accord. But she just completely put me at ease. In the movie, my character is looking for a mother figure, and that's kind of how I felt about Sigourney. I really felt nurtured and taken care of by her.

Q3

PLAYBOY: In *Cedar Rapids* you were half naked for a good portion of the movie. What's the Ed Helms pre-nude-scene fitness regime?

HELMS: I think it's pretty clear there wasn't much of a fitness regime at all. We shot it during November and December in Michigan, which is not a climate conducive to outdoor fitness activities. It's conducive to holing up with hot chocolate and doughnuts in *(continued on page 116)*

SCENTS & SENSIBILITIES

As part of its ongoing reinvention, British style stalwart Burberry presents **Sport Ice** (burberry.com), a limited-edition citrus fragrance.

$72

Kenneth Cole's newest, **Vintage Black** (kennethcole.com), reaches back to yesterday's standard scents, wood and musk chief among them.

$68

Speaking of retro twists, Penguin, popularizer of 1950s suburban golf-course wear, returns to its roots with the sage and apple **Original Penguin** (originalpenguin.com).

$65

Made with peppermint and eucalyptus, **JB** eau de parfum (getjackblack.com) layers perfectly with Jack Black's line of grooming products.

$70

What's that about simplicity? Oh yeah, it's elegant, too. Long-lasting **Chrome** by Azzaro (azzaroparis.com) is the paradigm of the simple but elegant maxim.

$70

The intensity of Perry Ellis **Night** (perryellis.com) makes it best for nocturnal fun.

$60

The sweetest smell of success? Saffron, among the world's rarest spices and the key ingredient in **C** from Clive Christian (clive.com).

$375

PHOTOS BY ZACHARY J. JOHNSTON | FASHION BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES | TEXT BY STEVE GARBARINO

MUSKS OF THE LADY-KILLERS

You think looks, power and charm are enough for epic female conquest? Hardly. Aromatics help. For example, legend has it **JFK** wore circa-1948 Vetiver by Creed (though his presidential library denies he ever wore cologne). **Cary Grant, George Clooney, Robert Redford** and **Clint Eastwood** have all allegedly worn Creed's Green Irish Tweed. (Talk about staying power: Creed has been in business since 1760.) **Johnny Depp** reportedly likes Zino Davidoff. **Brad Pitt** goes Clean for Men. **Bill Clinton, Burt Reynolds** and **Hugh Grant** have trusted Gendarme ("the unofficial fragrance of California...sensual yet professional and down to business").

Gentlemen share. Calvin Klein's unisex **One Summer** (calvinkleinfragrances.com) is intended for both you and her.

$46

If Perry Ellis has the night, give **Curve for Men** (getcurve.com)—a blend of mahogany and fresh lavender—the daylight hours.

$50

The most stylish man alive, Tom Ford, fashioned **Azure Lime** (tomford.com) after his stylish getaway spot, the Caribbean island of Mustique.

$190

Marc Jacobs's **Bang** (marcjacobsbang.com) is all about first impressions, bursting forth with notes of peppercorn and patchouli.

$75

Liquid courage need not come just in a shot glass. Diesel's **Only the Brave** (diesel-fragrance-factory.com) brings the bravado as well.

$70

Stay smart with Givenchy's **Pi** (givenchy.com), intended to be the thinking man's cologne.

$72

Lacoste's **Essential Sport** (lacoste.com) is as crisp and clean as the tennis whites the apparel company is best known for.

$70

Jack Nicholson sprays Michael Jordan (once purported to have been made with "bottled sweat"). The old school? **Hemingway** reportedly wore American One 31. **Errol Flynn:** Cuir de Russie, which Creed made specifically for him. **F. Scott Fitzgerald:** Lieber Gustav 14 (tellingly spicy, flowery, unisexy; **Marlene Dietrich** also wore it). **Sinatra:** Bois du Portugal, or so it is said. **Bogie:** Tabarome Millésime. **Sean Connery:** Habit Rouge and Jicky. **Roger Moore** used Brut 33 as a weapon in 1974's *The Man With the Golden Gun.* And speaking of nostalgia, in the 2004 nod to the chauvinistic 1970s, *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy,* **Paul Rudd**'s character, lead field reporter Brian Fantana, wears a gasoline-smelling concoction called Sex Panther, said to be "illegal in nine countries, made with bits of real panther." That's real animal lust.

KOVACS'S

GIFT

THE WRITER WHO SINGLE-HANDEDLY MADE BROOKLYN HIP GIVES US A LOOK AT A FORGOTTEN COMEDIAN WHO DEFINED COOL FOR GENERATIONS OF ENTERTAINERS

BY JONATHAN LETHEM

Warning: There's a mystery at the heart of this inquiry, one we won't really be able to penetrate here, instead only hope to define the better to abide with it. The mystery I have in mind isn't what I like to call the Bob Hope–Lenny Bruce Perplex, though it does apply to Ernie Kovacs; i.e., why need we be given so many (predictable) life decades of the one, such scant (mercurial) years of the other? Why couldn't a few years, *heck, even months,* have been shifted from one to the other? For me Kovacs goes with Nathanael West and Buddy Holly in the greatest-potential-futures-unrealized column. (Cars and airplanes have a lot to answer for.) But the Hope-Bruce thing is merely a fannish way of

Clockwise from far left: Kovacs and cast spoofing sci-fi on *The Ernie Kovacs Show* in 1956; Kovacs with prop gun and real cigar; Kovacs's January 15, 1962 funeral in Beverly Hills, attended by Jack Benny, George Burns, Samuel Goldwyn and Edward G. Robinson; Kovacs's infamous 1957 sight gag; wife Edie Adams and the comedian on the set of *The United States Steel Hour* in 1961.

complaining about death's arbitrariness.

Anyway, cataloging Potential Unrealized—a mug's game, in truth—shouldn't stand in the way of lavishing appreciation for the thing that *was* given, of scrupulously cherishing said gift, of raising its provider onto a pedestal commensurate with the pleasure and wonder we've drawn from said gift and also of archiving the evidence left behind, for securing it in libraries and museums and in the annals of culture. Only, in Kovacs's case we've failed utterly. How many recent geniuses—not arcane, hermetic geniuses ensconced in some high modernist castle, I mean, but accessible, relevant, capricious, joyous, salt-of-the-earth, explosively generous and even utterly silly geniuses (are there any others who'd even rate all those adjectives besides Kovacs?)—how many of *those* are so utterly erased from their right place in cultural memory? In Ernie Kovacs's case, literally erased. Taped over, for crissakes.

This goes beyond any artist's worst fears of being out of print or of receding into mists of antiquity or even of being a victim of the chemical time bomb of nitrate prints that have devoured century-old silent films; this is more recent and irresponsible and lousy even than that. *They taped over his work,* the fuckers. Here's Ernie Kovacs—the bridging figure, at the very least, between Groucho Marx and David Letterman, the immediate and proximate father, at the very least, of both *Monty Python's Flying Circus* and Nam June Paik, the uncle, at the very least, of *Laugh-In* and *The Tonight Show* and a thousand lesser television moments, the permissive next-door neighbor, at the very least, of Donald Barthelme and Frank Zappa—a man whose great work was accomplished in the 1950s and 1960s

Here's Kovacs—the bridging figure between Groucho Marx and David Letterman; the father of Monty Python's Flying Circus.

and whose widow and collaborator was alive until two years ago as of this writing and who is, rather than a household name, a rumor, a subliminal notion, perhaps even a secret to which you and I have, until now, alone been privy.

Eh? What's that I hear you say? *Who's Ernie Kovacs?*

Friend, I'm deeply disappointed in you. I thought we were together in this. And no, I'm not going to sell Ernie Kovacs to you, for as luck would have it I (finally) don't need to. Thanks to Shout! Factory's expert new *Ernie Kovacs Collection* boxed set, amassing nearly all of the sublime remnants that still can be assembled—the original talk and variety shows, commercials, interviews, onetime specials on which Mr. Kovacs forged his revolutionary, surrealistic but totally unpretentious style of comedic video art—enough of which survive so that the secret needn't be a secret any longer. No, with what space remains here I'll pretend I didn't even hear that terrible question you asked and instead begin a personal accounting of a few of the peculiar things I love about Ernie Kovacs and how they came to me, and then I'll try to define that mystery I mentioned to begin with.

1. Ernie Kovacs was, along with the Beatles and the Monkees, Alfred Hitchcock and Mel Brooks, Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov, one of the 10 or so cultural things I most plainly recall my mother deliberately introducing to me. It happened when PBS ran a sequence of the Kovacs specials in 1977. I was 13, and my mother simply sat me down in front of our family's television (on which everything, up to and including *The Wizard of Oz,* was broadcast in the same black-and-white as the Kovacs shows). She didn't need to do more than that. All of the Beatles and Monkees, Brooks, Bradbury, Asimov and Hitchcock were at that time alive, so Kovacs was my introduction to dying too young. Since my mother was about to do that herself, it's probably not surprising how personal this feels to me.

2. The Nairobi Trio is (and I've conducted tests on my own children, trust me) one of only two things in the entire universe with the power to wildly delight any human being, from a two-year-old to the most sophisticated (i.e., sullen, punk, tripping on drugs) teenager to adults of any age, and do so not only on first contact but repeated to infinity. I'm certain this effect would pertain across any imaginable cultural or linguistic boundary, and I'd even be willing to bet that there are certain animal species (guess) who'd likely be entertained by the trio. (The sole other thing containing this vast power is a Buster Keaton gag in a short called *The Scarecrow,* involving a dog chasing Keaton along the top walls of a roofless structure. One of the last things Ernie Kovacs filmed was a pilot for a television show called *The Medicine Man,* featuring himself and Buster Keaton. Buster Keaton, along with Jack Benny, Edward G. Robinson, Jimmy Stewart and many others, attended Kovacs's funeral.) So what's the Nairobi Trio? Three *(concluded on page 122)*

"Yes, Dean, I <u>am</u> getting a good feel for the student body this semester."

ENCORE!

ENCORE!

DANCING WITH THE STARS'

KARINA SMIRNOFF

GIVES US A PRIVATE SHOW

Karina Smirnoff is about to have a perfect moment. A six-time U.S. world ballroom-dancing champion and professional dancer-starlet on one of the most popular shows on TV, *Dancing With the Stars*, she will have her moment not on camera nor even on a stage. She's sitting in an upscale pizza place outside Los Angeles, talking about Jennifer Lopez—whom she coached for the 2004 flick *Shall We Dance?*—when from out of nowhere, who should appear?

"Karina!" says J. Lo, sidling up in a pair of beautiful booty-hugging blue jeans.

"Jennifer!" Karina responds. "I was just talking about you!"

Karina stands, and heads turn as the two stunners give each other a nice...long... squeeze. For the next five minutes, La Lopez gushes about Karina, then bids her adieu with a kiss. Eyes welling, Karina smiles.

"That," she says, "was a perfect moment."

Karina's day has come. The tautly woven

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
STEPHEN WAYDA

TEXT BY
BRANTLEY BARDIN

performer is shaking her money-maker these days—designing shoes for Bearpaw, promoting her new fitness DVD, *Shape Up With Karina Smirnoff,* and her makeup line with Girlactik Beauty. She also just opened her first dance studio. With rows of trophies from international competitions, she's more highly decorated than General Patton. "There's no luck," says Karina. "There's only opportunity and preparation. I've worked my butt off."

Has she ever. Smirnoff was born 33 years ago in what is now Kharkiv, Ukraine to a Jewish Greek dad and a Russian mother. "Couldn't get a feistier combination than that, could you?" she laughs. As a child, she dove into gymnastics, ballet and ice-skating. At 11 she entered ballroom competitions, and three years later the family—which has no relation to the vodka concern—moved to the Bronx.

"We had zero money and had to start from scratch," she recalls. "My mom and I cleaned hair salons for 60 bucks a week while my dad distributed newspapers by foot because we had no car." Karina supplemented the salon income with ballroom-dancing gigs at Russian restaurants so she could pay for dance lessons. By the time she was at Fordham University, double majoring in economics and information systems programming, she was already touring the world's stages.

Postgraduation, Karina committed fully to the dance floor. "Little by little I became a star in the ballroom world," she says. "But outside of ballroom nobody knew who I was. And I wanted to conquer the world."

Then came *Dancing With the Stars*. Karina made her debut on season three, during which she famously began a two-year-long liaison with partner Mario Lopez. These days, however, Karina shares her most private dances with Brad Penny, a major league pitcher with the Detroit Tigers, whom she met through mutual friend Chuck Liddell, former Ultimate Fighting Championship light heavyweight title holder. Among Karina's other interests are boxing, skydiving and shooting guns.

"I'm fearless and love the adrenaline rush," she says.

As for her body, Karina has her own definition of *sexy*. You can see it all over these pages, but here it is in her own words: "Sexy is the confident energy a person produces. Sexy is the comfortable feeling of being who you are. Sexy is not just having beautiful lips, legs and arms; it's beyond that. Sexy is soul."

See more of Karina at
playboy.com/smirnoff.

REVOLUTION

(continued from page 44)

the uprising began. "It was an operation to extract a very tough wisdom tooth which was terribly embedded. But it couldn't resist," Aswany said, his eyes twinkling. "Even my assistants were saying, 'Are we going to take this tooth out?' I said, 'Yes, it's going to get out.' And I took it out—it took an hour. But it will take more with Mr. Mubarak."

•

As I left Aswany's office and walked about a mile north toward Tahrir, my BlackBerry buzzed to life; the internet had finally been restored. Still, I felt a sense of foreboding that even Aswany's articulate optimism couldn't soothe.

As I approached the square my pulse quickened when I saw a young man in a gray baseball cap and jacket pull out a spray-paint canister, draw a big *X* over the anti-Mubarak graffiti that protesters had scrawled on the walls and write in a new message. He clapped a friend on the back and they strode off toward the square.

I snapped a photo with my cell phone and e-mailed it to my Egyptian colleague for translation. "He crossed out 'Leave,'" she said, "and wrote 'We love you.'" Mubarak's loyalists were girding for battle.

•

At the north end of Tahrir—across from the stately peach-colored palace that houses the Egyptian Museum and one of the world's most valuable collections of antiquities—I stood on a sidewalk and watched a large group of pro-Mubarak demonstrators mass in front of a handful of Egyptian soldiers. The soldiers had set up a flimsy barricade with a few planks of wood, and it quickly became clear it wouldn't hold back the mob that was gesturing angrily toward the people inside the square. They were carrying large pictures of Mubarak and waving their fists.

In the blink of an eye the barricade fell away and the mob surged into the square.

The huge crowds in Tahrir had overwhelmed the cell phone networks, and I couldn't get a call through to any of the translators I knew. A cry went up from the mob as it surged past, and I felt bodies all around, pushing roughly past me, elbows in my ribs and back. "*Allahu akbar!*" they chanted. "God is great!" Wave upon wave, numbering easily in the tens of thousands, they thundered toward the center of the square, where the Mubarak foes had camped for more than a week and were now, instantly, outnumbered.

It was startling how much the whole thing had been choreographed—the grim invention of a regime intent on keeping power and punishing its opponents. "Why are you here?" I yelled after one man.

He looked back at me and motioned nonchalantly toward the anti-Mubarak protesters. "I want to kill them," he said.

•

For hours each side rained stones and Molotov cocktails on the other. The protesters had dug up a construction site inside Tahrir—the future site of a new Ritz-Carlton—and were firing chunks of concrete back at their attackers. I retreated to my hotel room, and by nightfall the view from my balcony was of a square in flames. The crack of automatic gunfire echoed across the sky, and when my editor called from Washington I felt as though I was yelling to be heard over the sounds of battle.

When I finally reached Ahmed Salah on his cell phone he was breathless with anger. "It's an extremely low and disgusting reaction from this dictator, who is willing to put his whole country on fire," he said. "But most of the protesters have this idea: There is no way they turn back after this."

Soldiers were firing rounds into the air to control the crowds. On the street below the hotel, a gaggle of pro-Mubarak thugs were waving laser pointers at the windows, trying to scare the guests. Later I would learn that pro-Mubarak snipers were firing at demonstrators from rooftops.

I decided that standing on my balcony was a bad idea. I turned the lights off, and for the rest of the night I typed wearing a small camping headlamp that I'd last used when I was reporting in a remote village in southern Sudan four months earlier. I tried to be invisible.

•

Curiosity finally got the better of me around midnight. If the protesters repelled the government onslaught, I thought, it would be a pivotal moment in their fight to topple Mubarak. I decided to walk down to the overpass above the square.

CNN was playing jumpy footage of the Anderson Cooper beating over and over, telling viewers that journalists had become targets. While I figured I wouldn't attract attention like a star anchor and his crew, I didn't take chances. I stripped myself of pens, notebooks, camera, voice recorder, press card. I was the only one walking out of the hotel that night, buttoning my jacket against the crisp winter air. Tahrir was just a few hundred yards away, and the chants of anti-Mubarak protesters—"He must go! We will never go!"—rose from the square like war cries.

I walked below the overpass through an empty intersection strewn with pro-Mubarak signs and chunks of concrete, the government thugs seemingly having left their weapons behind. An army tank was stationed at the bottom of the bridge, but no one looked at me as I stepped gingerly past it and walked up to the top of the bridge, where a crowd of young men had gathered. I walked slowly and with my head down, but suddenly there was a commotion. A few young men started running toward me, then dozens. Some were carrying rocks the size of skulls; one was brandishing a knife the length of my forearm.

These were Mubarak's boys. I didn't know if they had noticed me or if they were retreating from an attack. Without hesitating, I turned and broke into a run, my heart pounding, my legs pumping, and I didn't stop until I saw the patchy green lawn of the Hilton.

•

The next morning in the hotel lobby, a line of reporters stood around looking frustrated.

"They're kicking people out," one said.

The receptionist asked for my room number before telling me the hotel was full and I'd have to leave the following morning. He did the same thing for the Japanese photographer who asked next. None of us believed that this 36-story behemoth of a hotel could possibly be booked solid with Cairo in the grip of a revolution and tourists fleeing the country.

Outside, I saw a small group of young men clustered outside the gate. One was pointing animatedly up at windows on my side of the hotel. I couldn't make out what they were saying in Arabic but I understood one word clearly: "Cameras." They had found the journalists.

•

That afternoon, fear spread through the press corps like a runaway virus.

Several foreign journalists were beaten up by pro-Mubarak thugs at various points around Cairo. A Lebanese American friend, *Washington Post* Cairo bureau chief Leila Fadel, had been arrested along with her driver and no one had heard from her for several hours. An Egyptian American freelancer, Ashraf Khalil, was beaten by a mob as he tried to conduct an interview a mile from Tahrir. I heard that Swedish television had lost contact with one of their correspondents (we later learned that he was stabbed multiple times) and that a BBC cameraman had his equipment confiscated as he tried to enter my hotel.

Then one of the Arabic news channels flashed a bulletin at the bottom of the screen. Gangs had entered the lobby of the Hilton.

•

I scanned my room. My laptop was open next to a stack of notebooks and a camera. A cable led to the balcony, where my satellite modem was still connected. An envelope with all my cash—about $5,000—was sitting on the desk. And there was my American passport splayed open on my bed. I stashed everything in the room safe or under the mattress and dead-bolted the door.

Had I told anyone that I was in the hotel? Then a flash of panic: The day before, I'd done a radio interview with *The Diane Rehm Show* on NPR and announced to her nationwide audience that I was standing on a balcony of the Hilton.

There was a heavy knock at the door of the room next to mine. I looked through the peephole and saw a beefy guy in a blue blazer who looked like hotel security. I knew the woman next door was a producer with an American news network because I'd heard her on the phone with her assignment desk in New York.

"Do you have a camera on your balcony?" the man asked. She immediately closed the door on him.

"What we're trying to do here is introduce Hamlet to a wider audience."

Seconds later, the phone in my room rang and my heart stopped. I picked up the receiver slowly. It was room service; I'd forgotten that I'd ordered dinner just a few minutes earlier.

The voice on the other end was jittery. "Sorry, sir, but the kitchen is closed. There is trouble in the hotel."

•

Phoning down to the lobby was risky, I decided; I didn't know who was manning the phones and what they'd think when they heard an American voice. "Sit tight," my editor in Washington told me. "We'll call Hilton corporate." But I worried that they weren't in charge of their hotel anymore.

After what felt like an eternity, two pieces of paper were slipped under the door. One listed new emergency evacuation procedures; the other was a letter from the hotel manager with new regulations for journalists. No more filming from inside the hotel, mentioning the hotel's name in news reports or interviewing any of the guests or staff.

I let another hour pass before calling room service again. This time I was greeted by a solicitous voice. "What would you like for dinner, Mr. Bengali?" he asked.

"Is everything okay? I was told there was some sort of trouble."

"Yes, of course, everything is fine," the voice said. "If you order dinner, I can recommend the pasta."

•

The fear I felt in my hotel room that evening was nothing compared with the story Tareq Hussein Ali had told me a few hours earlier in Tahrir Square.

I had gone down to interview people about the previous day's clashes when I saw Ali sitting alone on a concrete planter. The 30-year-old lawyer had a black eye, a leg swollen to the size of a tree trunk and a gray sweatshirt stained with so much blood that it looked as though he was wearing a bib. The blood had spurted from his scalp where a pro-Mubarak fighter struck him with a rock, and it ran down his face and neck, saturating his clothes.

Still he kept fighting. When he left his home to join the first day of the protests, he explained, he had told his parents, "I will come home victorious, or you will receive my dead body." Bandages now crisscrossed his head and blood had crusted around his bleary eyes. As we spoke, strangers would interrupt to embrace him or kiss one of his bandages—like citizens paying their respects to a soldier home from battle.

He would not go home that day, or any other day, until Mubarak resigned, he said.

"After last night, the government has lived the last days of its possibilities," Ali said. His English was broken yet searing. "What they have done means the end for them. Egypt will never be as it used to be."

•

Order had been restored at the Hilton, it seemed, but I felt far from safe. I'd learn later that the hotel staff had assured pro-Mubarak gangs that they'd restrict the work of journalists, and merely walking through the lobby now made me nervous. I had a new plan: I'd go low profile, working on my own and avoiding foreigners near the square. I even eschewed the translators I'd been working with, figuring I could find people who spoke English here and there inside Tahrir. I packed my bag and left the Hilton, and it was a relief to enter a new hotel lobby, one where I didn't see any foreigners hunched over their laptops or yelling into cell phones.

So my heart sank when the woman at the reception desk asked me as I checked in: "Are you a journalist?"

"No," I said and headed up to my room.

•

At least Egyptians were keeping their sense of humor. I opened my e-mail to find an illustration of Mubarak and President Obama huddling in the Oval Office. Obama is telling Mubarak, "It's time to say farewell to the Egyptian people." Mubarak replies, "Why—where are they going?"

•

I had barely seen my friend Leila since she was arrested, so one night she and I met for dinner in her leafy Zamalek neighborhood. It was just over the bridge from Tahrir, but the revolution seemed not to have reached this island of embassies, posh boutiques and European-style cafés. More than anything else we both wanted a drink, but after swapping stories and advice for several hours we had far overstayed the curfew that had been imposed over the city. After finding a taxi, dropping her off and navigating the maze of civilian checkpoints and military barricades around Tahrir, it was well after 11 P.M. when we reached the back entrance to my hotel.

Two men emerged from the shadows and rapped on the window, demanding to see the cabbie's license. There was something strange about this checkpoint. These men weren't the fresh-faced teens who'd taken over Cairo's street corners since the uprising began, inspecting IDs to deter thugs and looters. They started to question me in perfect English, and I realized with a sinking feeling that they probably were from the dreaded Egyptian state security.

I invented a story about working for a bank and being stuck in my hotel because international flights had been canceled. I thought it was convincing, but the smaller man asked for specifics. I fumbled for a few seconds before the bigger, pug-nosed man stuck his giant palm through my open window and onto my chest, feeling for my heartbeat.

"Are you nervous?" he sneered. "I think you're lying. Get out of the car."

Deciding I had to come clean, I produced the temporary press card the Egyptian authorities had given me when I'd arrived several months earlier—which had since expired. It was an unconvincing credential, just a handwritten card with my photo stapled to it, and when the big man laughed I wasn't sure if it was at the shoddy ID or at me.

He led me toward the main road, where a couple of Egyptian army soldiers were absentmindedly directing traffic even though there was none. The taxi driver, silent to that point, suddenly decided to speak up. I could make out flashes of what he was saying: *Lebanese, Zamalek, Marashly Street....*

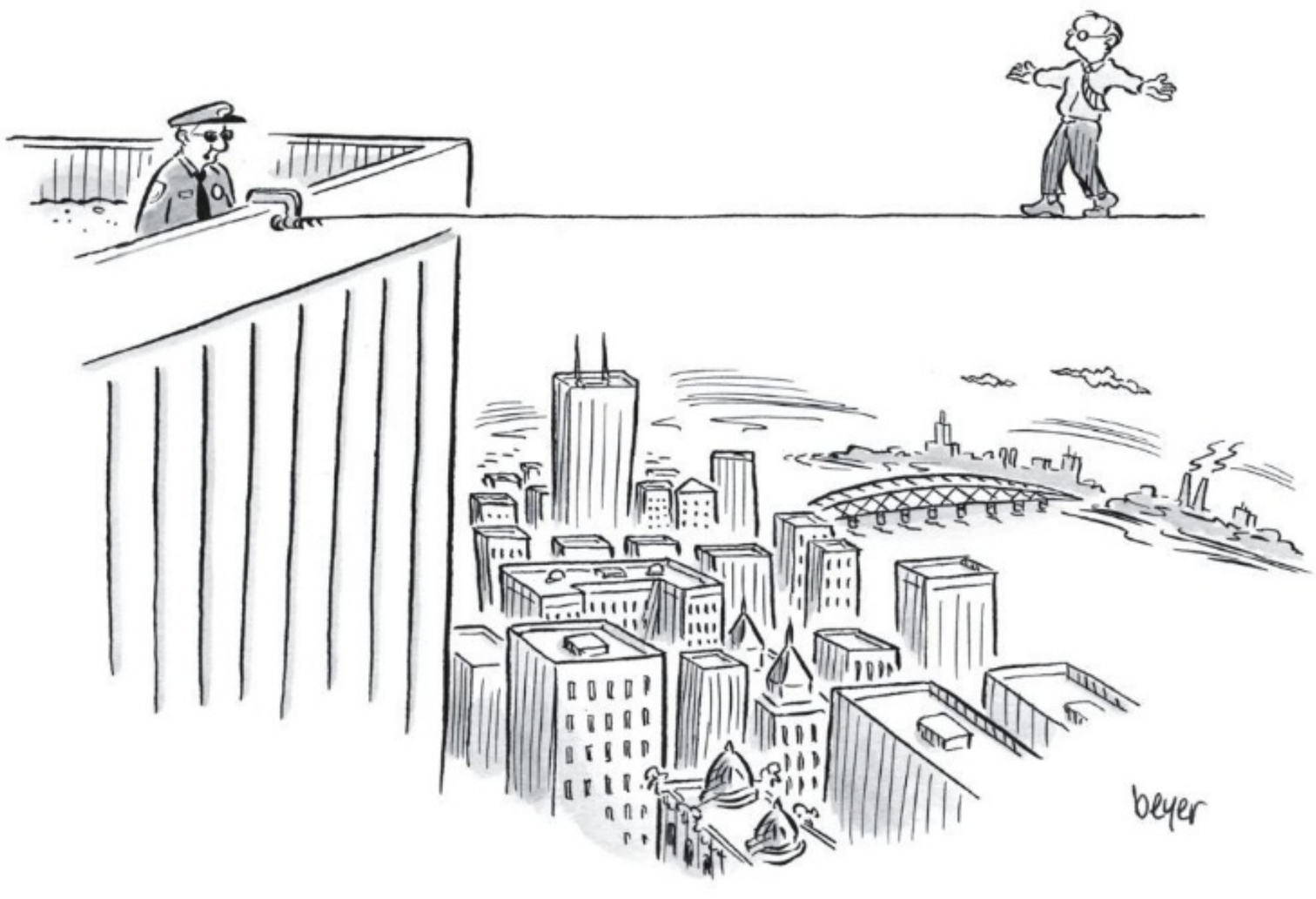
He was giving these guys Leila's home address.

A day earlier, a British reporter I'd run into downtown had told me that thugs had invaded the home of one foreign correspondent. It was a rumor, but now, standing on a street corner surrounded by armed men who wouldn't identify themselves, it was all I could think about.

"Why do you need her address, and what does it matter where she's from?" I said to the big man, feeling my face grow red.

"Oh, you know some of these Lebanese," he said. "They are very close with the Israelis."

It didn't take much experience to know how ridiculous this sounded; it was the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, after all, that had fought so bitterly with Israel in 2006, a war that Leila and I had covered together for McClatchy. But logic and reason had evaporated from



"Okay, sir...I'm satisfied. You can get back in your car."

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Cairo's security establishment, replaced by a virulent suspicion of anything foreign.

On this night, though I felt my heart might leap out of my jacket, I was spared any further trouble when a high-ranking army soldier appeared seemingly from out of nowhere and took my ID. He was brusque and businesslike, and after a few more questions and several minutes of silence, he told me I could leave. The pug-nosed man looked almost disappointed when I turned and walked the few yards to the door of my hotel.

More than anything, I felt sick about Leila. I called her to explain what had happened. She told me the next day that she asked a female friend to spend that night in her apartment because she didn't want to be alone.

•

A phalanx of tanks and soldiers guarded the entrance to the Radio and Television Building on the Nile, just north of Tahrir. In his second-story office, Attiya Shakran was shaking his head. The director of the Egyptian government's foreign press center, Shakran said that at least 22 journalists had been detained since the uprising began and that what I had experienced was a "misunderstanding."

I first met Shakran in January 2009, when he helped me obtain a permit to travel to the Egyptian border with Gaza during the bombardment by Israeli forces. We bonded over our California ties—he'd lived there for eight years and still had relatives in the Bay Area—and he offered a cursory apology.

Even this dedicated civil servant had reached the limits of his patience with the excesses of Mubarak's regime. "We have to get rid of all this corruption," Shakran told me. "This is why there is a revolution."

•

On the 17th night Leila and I met up with Muhammad Mansour, a 32-year-old reporter for a Japanese newspaper in Cairo who had quit his job to join the uprising, for what nearly everyone thought would be Mubarak's final speech as president. Word spread—including from the Obama administration—that the increasingly isolated leader had decided to resign. The crowds on that cold night were among the biggest ever to pack Tahrir, but when Mubarak delivered a defiant, rambling speech, refusing yet again to step down, the smiling faces around us hardened into stony silence. Some men fought back tears.

•

That night I happened to bump into Ahmed Salah, who wasn't in a mood to celebrate. Even if Mubarak left, he said, there was much work left to transform Egypt into a real representative democracy. His mind was occupied with thoughts of constitutional reform, military rule, political transition.

The following afternoon I was in my hotel room, waiting to do a radio interview, when Mubarak's vice president, Omar Suleiman, appeared on TV. Ashen-faced and terse, he said the words that so many Egyptians had longed to hear: Mubarak was stepping down. Immediately, car horns began blaring in celebration, and by the time I reached Tahrir a few minutes later the square was in full-blown party mode.

For several hours I moved among the throngs, letting the songs and laughter wash over me, letting strangers embrace and kiss me, gazing up at the fireworks and waving flags, abandoning for once the pretense of objectivity and allowing myself even to smile. I was in awe that this whole thing had come to pass, that I had witnessed it and that my friends and I had survived it.

Late that night, when I finally reached Salah again by phone, he was in tears.

"...Can you step it up a little? I'm going to miss my flight!"

BARNEY FRANK

(continued from page 38)

PLAYBOY: Bill O'Reilly attacked you on this. He said you were blaming everyone else. He called you a coward.

FRANK: He had no interest in a discussion about what really happened. It's what he does.

PLAYBOY: Why would you agree to be on his show?

FRANK: If you don't go on, he says those things unrefuted, but I wouldn't do it again. He suffered for that behavior and apologized.

PLAYBOY: Whether it's O'Reilly on the right or Lawrence O'Donnell on the left, do you worry political discourse has given way to shouting matches?

FRANK: I do. The climate has gotten meaner, and no one listens to one another. Politics has gotten meaner. Polarization isn't good. It divides us and we don't come together, which means we can't effectively solve problems.

PLAYBOY: How has the internet affected discourse?

FRANK: You can't make mistakes now. There's no room for mistakes because everything will be out there instantly.

PLAYBOY: Sometimes politicians seem to forget everything will be out there. For example, what was your reaction when your colleague Congressman Chris Lee was exposed after sending a picture of himself with his shirt off to a woman he met on Craigslist?

FRANK: Well, sometimes people bring it on themselves by their stupidity. The internet isn't forgiving. There's a lot of good in the technology, but there are dangers.

PLAYBOY: Do some come in the form of WikiLeaks?

FRANK: Yes, and I'm concerned about it. There's a need for people to be able to talk in private. I'm especially concerned about the leaked diplomatic cables. Diplomats have to make candid assessments that are private. Releasing them was a great unfairness. People were put at risk. I was amused that Mr. Assange was upset because some of his people are publishing a book about him, revealing his secrets. He said it was unfair and invaded his privacy.

PLAYBOY: How else has the internet changed politics?

FRANK: There's good there. People know more and can be involved. It has also been part of a worrying trend, which is a merging of opinion and journalism. It's harder to find objective journalism. It's harder to find what we used to call real news in the middle of shouting matches and gossip. Journalists should be skeptical. That's their job. In many cases now it's about advocating for one side or the other. Also, now the competition is to find the worst news. Bad news sells, apparently. And the worse the better.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on to some other issues. You were instrumental in the recent repeal of "don't ask, don't tell." Is the final nail in the coffin?

FRANK: Absolutely, and it's something I'm proud of. The Speaker and Senate majority leader essentially put me in charge of

the strategy to get it through. It was hard to do, and it's an important bill.

PLAYBOY: After the repeal, a right-wing journalist asked about the problems the bill will cause because openly gay men will be taking showers with straight men. You said, "We don't get ourselves dry-cleaned."

FRANK: I borrowed that from Alfred Hitchcock. A man complained to Hitchcock that after watching the famous shower scene in *Psycho,* his wife no longer took showers. Hitchcock said, "Have her dry-cleaned." The fact is, after all the fuss about "don't ask, don't tell," there's been no great backlash against its repeal. As we go forward people will see that it has had absolutely no negative effect, and it will be an issue of the past. There are always predictions of horrible things that will happen, but repealing "don't ask, don't tell" will have no negative consequences. We haven't weakened anything. Gay men and lesbians in the military will serve with distinction along with the other soldiers.

PLAYBOY: Is the legalization of gay marriage next?

FRANK: I don't see any change there. I don't see Congress doing anything about it.

PLAYBOY: Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. Although states may allow same-sex marriage, only recently did Obama say the federal government would no longer defend DOMA in court.

FRANK: There are lawsuits against it that I think will win anyway, because the federal government can't discriminate. Beyond that I don't see anything about gay marriage happening on a federal level. More and more states will go that way, though. When they do, people will see, as with health care and the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," that there are no negative consequences. Places that have gay marriage have had none of the negative consequences that people warned us about. Zero. The divorce rate hasn't gone up. There have been no calamities. Marriage hasn't lost its meaning. Same-sex marriage as a divisive issue is losing its steam. Overall I think antigay prejudice is on its way out.

PLAYBOY: Even from the religious right? The virulent attacks continue.

FRANK: But they aren't taken seriously. It's changing. It's just evolution.

PLAYBOY: What's behind the evolution?

FRANK: People are out. More and more people know people who are gay. People have gay friends and relatives; it's not kept in the closet anywhere near as much as it used to be.

PLAYBOY: Antigay sentiments are still expressed, often from the conservative right and especially from the Christian right. There are still hate crimes against gays.

FRANK: Yes, and we have to deal with them. We passed a bill to add crimes against gays and lesbians as hate crimes. Hate crimes, whether against gays or anyone else, can't be tolerated. Overall, antigay prejudice is diminishing. It won't be used by the far right the way it once was. It just doesn't work anymore. But I worry about what will replace it. I think they will increasingly focus on abortion, escalating it as their issue to inflame people. They'll work on whittling away the right to have an abortion, striking down any federal funding.

PLAYBOY: You've said abortion foes "feel as if life goes from conception to birth." What did you mean?

FRANK: They say no abortion, but they don't want to take care of the kids when they're born. They don't want to help mothers raise their children. They don't want to feed or educate kids. But they'll increasingly use abortion as an issue in coming elections.

PLAYBOY: Looking to the next presidential election, what's your take on the likely Republican contenders? Were you surprised to hear that your old adversary Newt Gingrich may be running?

FRANK: We Democrats have not lived lives sufficiently pleasing to God to have Gingrich be the Republican nominee in 2012.

PLAYBOY: Sarah Palin?

FRANK: Ibid.

PLAYBOY: What's your impression of Palin?

FRANK: There's less there than meets the eye.

PLAYBOY: Then to what do you attribute her continuing prominence?

FRANK: She presents better than the reality. She does fit the current mood, but there isn't much substance there.

PLAYBOY: Mitt Romney?

FRANK: No.

PLAYBOY: Is there anyone who could be a threat to President Obama?

FRANK: Not in the current crop. An American saying goes, "You can't beat somebody with nobody."

PLAYBOY: If he wins reelection, what would you like Obama to push for as a second-term president?

FRANK: The same as now—financial reform, protecting health care. I'd like him to take on defense. I'd like him to do better helping poor people. It's another thing I disagree with him on. In his budget he cut things that will hurt the poorest of the poor to show his bona fides as a budget cutter.

PLAYBOY: You've pushed for legalizing marijuana. Can you see the president joining you on that one?

FRANK: That's not likely. Marijuana is clearly a case where the public is way ahead of the politicians. The current policy is ludicrous. It's unfair and wasteful. It contributes to the illegal trade, the cartels and the big traffickers. I'm disappointed in some of my liberal friends for not moving on marijuana. It's generational; changes are coming.

PLAYBOY: What should be done with the war on drugs?

FRANK: All that money should be spent on prevention and treatment. The war on drugs doesn't work, it doesn't stop people from using, and we spend a fortune.

PLAYBOY: After the Tucson massacre, is new gun-control legislation likely?

FRANK: No. Nothing will change on that. The only thing that could happen is more monitoring so it's harder for people who shouldn't have guns to get them. I hope.

PLAYBOY: Clearly you have a long list of issues about which you still feel strongly,

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yet you had planned to retire after this term, at least according to some reports. Were they accurate?

FRANK: I thought of stepping down, yes.

PLAYBOY: You recently announced you'll run again. What changed your mind?

FRANK: If the Democrats had held the House, maybe I would have retired. I thought it might be a good time. But we lost, and there's too much at stake. I would have felt I was abandoning the battle when we were under siege.

PLAYBOY: After 30 years in this job, you've encountered many times when things were going well for the country and many when they were going badly. Is this just another swing of the pendulum, or are you particularly worried now?

FRANK: The threat to public policy is serious. We had a financial meltdown and were able to stop it. We put in place regulations that could prevent it from happening again. If it does happen again, we don't know if we'll be able to stop it. And yet the Republicans are trying to reverse the regulations. They're inflaming anger rather than seeking rational solutions. We're at risk of being unable to fix the problems we need to fix—education, health care, the deficit and many others. Yes, I'm worried.

PLAYBOY: In *The New Yorker* Congressman Scott Garrett, a Republican on the Financial Services Committee, was quoted as saying about you, "Barney has a great deal of faith in government to solve people's problems. The question is whether that faith is justified." Is it?

FRANK: The truth is I *don't* have faith in government to solve problems. What I do have faith in is our ability to come together to solve problems. It's what's hanging in the balance now. There's no outside entity called government. It's all of us, collectively and jointly. Will we be able to solve America's problems? That's why we're elected. All I can tell you is that I'll keep trying.

"Wow, Senators! What a wonderful demonstration of bipartisanship!"

O'Keefe

(continued from page 82)

of the few times he or O'Keefe's mother has spoken with the press.

Because misdirection is always foremost on O'Keefe's mind, our initial meeting comes with specific instructions. After arriving in the general area of the O'Keefe family home, I am to park my car and wait for him to drive me to an undisclosed location in the 1975 Triumph Spitfire roadster he bought in high school. (He has been replacing parts on the cheap ever since; his former assistant assured me it is a death trap—an especially bad thing considering how often he gets lost while driving.) Luckily, his friend's bachelor party causes the interview to be moved to Atlantic City. There, at the near-empty Red Square Bar inside the Tropicana, O'Keefe espouses political philosophy in filibuster-like volubility over the bluish glow of his laptop, which never leaves his side. (Wires abound; hence my suspicion he may be recording our discussion.) "Unless you've provided him with a computer, James isn't the guy you invite over for a beer and barbecue," says his friend Ben Wetmore.

A taste of O'Keefe unleashed: "I have nearly infinite faith in the power of free people, making their own decisions on what is best for them and their families, to create a great, lasting and moral society. I also agree with what [British polymath G.K.] Chesterton says—basically that a society should be judged by whether you can buy a house and raise a family. That is something my generation is struggling to do, because big business and big government are working together to prevent us from doing so. [British journalist] Douglas Hyde said those of us who see the danger and step back might really be the 'progressives,' possessing a new solution which was really the oldest of all."

O'Keefe found radical politics at Rutgers University. Although his professors were introducing him to such thinkers as lefty community organizer Saul Alinsky, O'Keefe took a hard right politically, aping Alinsky's methods toward a different end. (Today he classifies himself as a "progressive radical," the leader of an antiestablishment, anti–big business, anti-bureaucratic movement all his own.) His fucked-up freshman year probably also had something to do with his political identity. According to his college blog, Feathers of Steel, now the source of relentless ridicule among liberal bloggers at the Daily Kos: "To my horror, [one of my roommates] said to the all-black RAs that I called everyone on the floor 'niggers'—a complete lie. It was my word against his. I was led out of the room crying and screaming at him and my situation; no friends, no one to talk to, forced to go in front of a black dean to defend myself and explain I did not call anyone any names."

By O'Keefe's junior year, the Leadership Institute had staked him $500—Ben Wetmore, the organization's director of student publications, hand delivered the check—to start the conservative student newspaper

The Centurion. But O'Keefe's most indelible political statement at Rutgers came via freeze-dried marshmallow horseshoes and toasted oats. At Wetmore's caustic urging, O'Keefe decided to start a campaign to remove Lucky Charms, the children's cereal with the cartoon leprechaun mascot, from the dining halls' breakfast menu. And so, with faux outrage, he and three friends requested a meeting with university administrator Carolyn Knight-Cole to describe the pain the cereal inflicted on O'Keefe and his fellow Irish Americans. "We think that Lucky Charms promotes negative stereotypes of Irish Americans," O'Keefe explains to Knight-Cole, a hidden camera behind him recording her every move. "And we don't think it's acceptable in an academic setting."

Concerned, Knight-Cole stops her diligent note taking. O'Keefe places a box of Lucky Charms on the table in front of him. Its grinning leprechaun now beams directly at Knight-Cole. "There is what appears to be an Irish American on the front cover, and he's portrayed as a little green-cladded [sic] gnome, a huckster." He suppresses a laugh. "As you can see, we're not all short. We have our differences in height. We're really proud of our ancestry, but because of our history and what has happened to us, we think this undermines and it's offensive. It shouldn't belong here."

I consider it among his best work. O'Keefe clearly does too. It's such a part of his identity that he named his sailboat, among his most prized possessions, *The Lucky Charm*.

WHO THE LEFT THINKS HE IS

Choice bits from Daily Kos posts: "The BigGovernment.com [ACORN] video 'exposure' was the biggest bait and switch I've ever seen in my life. If instead of young conservative fascist 'reporters' it were police detectives conducting these 'advice' sessions, it would be the paradigm example of entrapment." "What I saw when I watched the [ACORN] video was two overprivileged kids in silly costumes using a hidden camera to pick on people who frankly had no idea what was going on." "[O'Keefe] is a D-bag. He founded a conservative monthly paper at Rutgers using Astroturf seed money. He writes 'slam poetry' about 9/11. And, oh yeah, he got kicked out of his freshman dormitory at Rutgers for calling someone the *N* word. He denies it, of course." "[O'Keefe's work] is sophomoric stuff, but what else fires up the 9/12ers, the birthers and the tea baggers?"

WHO THE RIGHT THINKS HE IS

After Rutgers, O'Keefe graduated to headier conservative circles, joining Wetmore at the Leadership Institute. Both O'Keefe and Wetmore made Morton Blackwell, conservative royalty and the institute's founder and president, uneasy. Wetmore, who possesses a cult leader's intellectual charisma, is especially divisive—partially loved but more often loathed among my friends. O'Keefe refers to him as a mentor-friend-genius. Others, however, classify Wetmore as dangerous and the Wetmore-O'Keefe dynamic as master-puppet. "Ben finally found someone crazy enough to implement his ideas," a close O'Keefe friend says. "I don't think he's risky enough," Wetmore counters by phone from New Orleans, where he attends law school. "I've seen him as a student, a vagrant and now. He's gotten to where he's at by taking risks, not shunning them. James won't achieve success doing what he does by listening to the chattering class or conventional wisdom. He'll do so by taking new calculated risks."

After about a year O'Keefe left the Leadership Institute to charge onward with a takedown of Planned Parenthood, an attack that, depending on whom you believe, sprang from Wetmore's imagination. His aim: to snare the abortion provider in a racial tempest. (Blackwell felt the sting fell outside the Leadership Institute's mandate. "We are an educational organization. We are not an activist organization," he explained to *The New York Times*. He had only nice things to say about O'Keefe to me.) O'Keefe hit pay dirt when Autumn Kersey, vice president of marketing and development at Planned Parenthood of Idaho, answered one of his phone calls, which, of course, he recorded and later posted to YouTube.

O'KEEFE: Okay, so the abortion—I can give money specifically for a black baby?
KERSEY: Absolutely. If you wanted to designate that your gift be used to help an African American in need, we would certainly make sure that the gift was earmarked for that purpose.
O'KEEFE: Great, because I really faced trouble with affirmative action, and I don't want my kids to be disadvantaged against black kids. I just had a baby; I want to put it in his name.
KERSEY: Yes, absolutely.
O'KEEFE: So that's definitely possible?
KERSEY: Always.
O'KEEFE: He's trying to get into colleges, and he's going to be applying.... He's faced troubles with affirmative action. You know, we just think that the less black kids out there the better.
KERSEY: Understandable. Excuse my hesitation; this is the first time I've had a donor call and make this kind of request. So I'm excited and want to make sure I don't leave anything out.

The call generated remarkable fallout, inspiring a blowup between Planned Parenthood and African American leaders. Impressed from afar, Hannah Giles, a 20-year-old journalism student at Florida International University, friended O'Keefe on Facebook. Soon after, she sent O'Keefe her own scheme to defrock ACORN, an organization those of us on the right believed to be seriously corrupt. "I came up with the [pimp-prostitute plot] in May 2009, after which I did a lot of research and background investigation," she writes via e-mail. "Then I called James, knowing he had the experience and ability to make it happen. We met in person the day before we went undercover."

Almost immediately everyone around me sainted Giles and O'Keefe—a designation further enforced by the media's initial impulse to investigate the duo's tactics rather than what they had discovered about ACORN. Breitbart demanded they receive a Pulitzer Prize, and Fox News treated them as the new Woodward and Bernstein. Even Morton Blackwell called to congratulate O'Keefe after Congress zeroed ACORN's funding. O'Keefe went from creative dweeb to conservative supernova overnight—sent to Earth, in conservative minds at least, to expose how ACORN, Planned Parenthood and *The New York Times* were leading a vast

left-wing conspiracy to control the news, spend us into oblivion and murder unborn babies. I will never forget the gnarly horde of 20-somethings in khakis and blue blazers (a.k.a. Republican groupies) who shadowed O'Keefe's every move at the 2010 Conservative Political Action Conference.

Yet in the space of two years, his supporters have splintered into true believers (i.e., Wetmore) and the rest of us (i.e., Blackwell, Breitbart and I). Starting with Lucky Charms and ending with ACORN, O'Keefe's stunts were a perfect bell curve of hits against liberals too lazy to watch their ass. Who knows if they were new acts of journalism, but they hanged sanctimonious leftist organizations with their own hypocrisy. What red-blooded conservative doesn't like that? I can't say the same about what came next. O'Keefe risked a prison sentence by misrepresenting himself to Senator Landrieu's Louisiana office. For what? The best-case scenario was he'd prove she was ignoring voter complaints about Obamacare. I wasn't alone in saying big fucking deal. (News flash: Elected officials may not listen to their constituents.) If anything, my crowd pulled their punches because MSNBC took such glee in his arrest, making him out to be the next G. Gordon Liddy.

He did use up a lot of goodwill, however. That's partly why the knives came out on all sides after the CNN sex-boat mess. Plus, no one I know thought the premise—another Wetmore brainstorm—was clever. It was mostly convoluted. Try to follow me: O'Keefe attempted to seduce CNN's Abbie Boudreau on camera because, O'Keefe and Wetmore thought, the only way such an attractive reporter could get interviews with reluctant sources like him was by using her powers of seduction. A jar of condoms, dildos and strawberries were to be added for comic effect, according to a written plan obtained by CNN. In the end, it proved much easier to frame O'Keefe as a misogynist than as a revolutionary political provocateur.

Therein lies his most deficient character trait—he struggles to separate good ideas from bad ones. "One thing I noticed after I started working with him was that he began asking for and taking my advice almost immediately without knowing who I am or whether I'm trustworthy or have the credibility to lead him the right way," says another mutual friend. "Fortunately, my motives are pure. But I would find it disconcerting if he trusted everyone else as easily as he trusted me."

WHO HIS MARKS THINK HE IS

When I mention the name Sonja Merchant-Jones, the Maryland ACORN co-chair O'Keefe basically put out of business, he draws a blank. "That name sounds familiar. Can you remind me?" When I do, his reaction is minimal. I also have to remind him who Carolyn Knight-Cole, the Rutgers administrator, and Autumn Kersey, the Planned Parenthood representative, are. Such forgetfulness takes a special kind of mind. All three women definitely remember him. Knight-Cole sounds like a grandmother whose grandson has stolen from her; she now has total disdain for someone she was trained to love. Kersey refuses to speak about him at all. For her part, Merchant-Jones seems to hate ACORN more than O'Keefe. "All is fair in love and war," she tells me. "If the shoe were on the other foot, we would have done the same thing. I don't have any hard feelings about James. Well done, James O'Keefe. Well done."

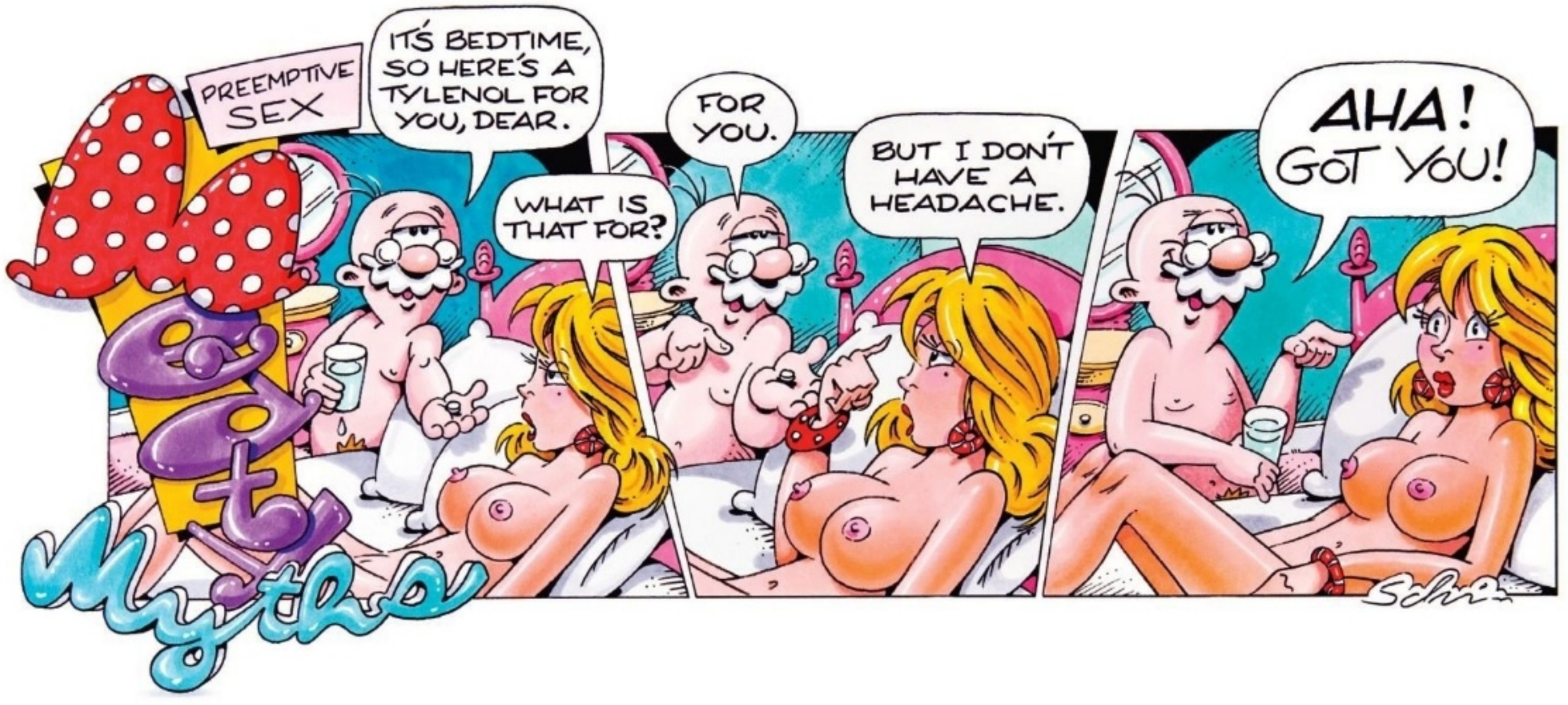
WHO I THINK HE IS

Fair warning, liberals: I am positive O'Keefe can be redeemed. Already a slower, smarter comeback is under way. The newest conservative star, New Jersey governor Chris Christie, blessed a recent O'Keefe production called *Teachers Unions Gone Wild,* a mashup of drunken antics from New Jersey public schoolteachers. (In it they explain how tenure can protect them even if they blast students with racial slurs.) "If you need an example of how the teachers' union is out of touch with the people and out of control, watch this video," Christie implored. "It's enlightening, and it's enraging." Says O'Keefe, "Someone pointed out that [the New Jersey Education Association] was holding a conference, so I organized half a dozen people to attend it. The tapes were a collaborative effort. The people in them have chosen to remain anonymous."

For his next act, he should untangle himself from the weeds. While admirable, his myopic devotion to the cause clouds his perspective. If O'Keefe were my client, I would hand him a flowchart of the positive people and the parasites in his life. Then I would take away his internet connection until he could come up with a long-term plan. And I don't mean a new hit list of liberal targets to lampoon. He needs to figure out how to leverage what he's accomplished into a paying gig that doesn't rely on the generosity of anonymous wealthy donors with an ax to grind. He can't run his movement from his parents' house forever. "So many people assume he's doing this for fame and fortune," says a friend. "But he's as poor as a church mouse. He has yet to figure out how to market himself and make some money on these crazy ventures." To his credit, before rolling out his latest punkings, against NPR and PBS, he discussed them with PR professionals and gave thought to how to use them as a fund-raising tool.

He won't tell me how much work he has stashed away, but I've heard it's substantial. My favorite alleged secret work is on a collection of resorts in which a prominent politician reportedly has an ownership stake. The resorts are said to offer a high-end call-girl service. To determine if the rumor is true, O'Keefe and a friend rented a Mercedes and posed as a couple of high rollers on vacation. They must keep what they uncovered in their vault, however, because they acquired the evidence through questionable legal means.

It's a fine line between maverick political activist and criminal.



SOCRATES

(continued from page 58)

if that person is not in show business," Jackie responded.

At this Socrates and his agent smiled and nodded.

And before he could fully swallow, much less comprehend, his kebab, Socrates had made an appointment to do lunch with Jackie.

Unlike Socrates, Jackie had already become a star in her field. She was already known for being one of the shallowest thinkers in all of Greece. And now she was so busy she could hardly get through a conversation without being interrupted by one of the many messengers she constantly had coming and going. In fact, Jackie was one of the first people to use "messenger waiting," which enabled her to have several messengers going at the same time. (This was a practice many Publicists employed in order to make themselves seem more important to prospective clients.)

A week later Socrates met Jackie for lunch. As they spoke she told him several times that she thought he was "amazing!" In fact, after just about anything Socrates said, Jackie responded with "amazing!" sometimes changing the inflection to "uh-mayzing!"

Socrates was charmed.

Jackie went on and on about how much she admired Socrates and his "unique perspective" and told him how she loved his "whole question thing."

To this Socrates replied, "What do you mean?"

"Exactly!" Jackie responded. "That's what I'm talking about. Uhh-mayyzing!"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Socrates, clearly flattered and completely disarmed.

"Well, I do," she replied. "You are *fantastic*. Everyone needs to know how fantastic you are. You *have* to let me help you. People need to know about Socrates and his question thing."

By the time the conversation was over, the Publicist had convinced Socrates that he needed to work with her. But when she told him how much Publicity would cost, Socrates began to have second thoughts. But then Jackie explained that she had already sent several messengers out on his behalf, and therefore, technically, she and Socrates were already working together.

Socrates became philosophical. He asked himself, Is man essentially good, despite hiring someone to promote him? And then he asked himself, Do I want to go back to doing odd jobs for people in the neighborhood? And with that he decided to give the whole Publicist thing a shot.

Jackie got right to work, promising Socrates that she would make him famous. "We're going to create the Socrates 'brand,'" she explained. "Socrates is not just a person or a philosophy. It's an industry, and that's how we will sell you."

First, she convinced Socrates to lose his last name.

"Socrates Pappandreopoulos is too clunky for people," she told him. Your name should be simple and catchy, and it should tell people that you are a hot philosopher who seeks truth and does it with his own cool question method."

Socrates suggested "Socrates Truth" as a stage name for himself.

"Nah, too on the head," responded Jackie.

Then Socrates pitched "Socrates?" as a stage name.

"Nah," she countered. "That makes you sound unsure of yourself. You should just be 'Socrates.' It's direct. It's strong. And it has a good ring to it."

And from then on Socrates was billed as "Socrates."

Jackie's instincts proved right. Overnight, Socrates became a trendsetter. Other philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle and Gus, quickly followed suit, dropping their last names too. And for centuries after that there would be countless imitators, including Voltaire, Michelangelo and, much later, Cher.

Jackie continued to promote Socrates. She got him booked at parties. He worked at weddings. She promoted him at local schools and in the Agora. Socrates suddenly found himself thinking all over Athens and often in front of large crowds. His career was flourishing more than he could ever have imagined. At the same time, though, he felt a creeping emptiness. As he spent more and more time searching for publicity, he spent less and less time searching for truth. And with all his public appearances, Socrates was becoming overexposed.

He was also spending a lot of money. In addition to paying his agent and now his Publicist, Socrates was paying an Empiricist, a Monist and a Stylist as well, all of whom were recommended by Jackie.

Socrates was getting uncomfortable. He scheduled a meeting with Jackie. This time they "grabbed" lunch, as both had become even busier and more entrenched in show business.

At lunch Socrates voiced his misgivings.

"Should I be doing all of this?" he asked. "I mean, is the unexamined life even worth——"

"Are you being serious?" interrupted Jackie. "Do you want to be a star philosopher or do you want to go back to waiting tables?"

Jackie was one of the few people who really knew how to handle Socrates, usually by cutting him off and answering his questions with a question of her own. And, as always, she managed to convince Socrates that she was right and managed to avoid being fired. Socrates listened to her, then paid for both of their lunches and went right back to work.

It was shortly after that fateful lunch that the backlash began. Socrates's constant questions had become intolerable to many of the Greek elite. Still, as his Publicist had promised, he had become a brand. Imitators all over Athens were now practicing the new Socratic method. More and more young people were asking one another questions and doing it with Socrates's patented smart-assy tone.

A few days later, Socrates was brought to trial and charged with corrupting the youth.

Socrates wanted to apologize to the Senate. He knew his constant public appearances had angered a lot of people. So he prepared a speech for the trial and called it "The Apology." But moments before he was scheduled to appear before the Senate, he received a message backstage. It was from Jackie. She wanted to talk with him. A minute later she appeared.

"You can't do this," she pleaded.

"Do what?"

"Apologize. That's what everyone expects you to do. If you do that, then there will be no surprise, no twist, and without that there will be no story. And with no story, there's no career, Socrates."

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"But what if they find me guilty?"

"That's exactly what you want! Go out there and surprise them. Throw the charges back in their faces. Let them find you guilty. It will get people talking. And if they offer you exile, don't take it. Go for death! What you need to do is the most extreme, unexpected thing you can think of."

"Really?" the confused philosopher asked.

"Yes! This is your chance to make *real* headlines, Socrates. Trust me. And don't worry about the sentence they give you. I'll take care of it. I know so many people in the Senate, I can easily spin it so that you won't have to die or whatever else they threaten you with."

Socrates thought for a long moment. "Are you sure?"

"Yeees! Trust me. It'll be amaaazing!"

A few minutes later, Socrates found himself standing before the Senate delivering his, now infamous, final speech. Following his Publicist's advice, the overexposed philosopher defied the Senate and declared to them and to his fellow Athenians that he would opt for death by drinking hemlock. And sure enough, everyone who heard him was stunned.

Socrates finished his speech and returned to his cell. Awaiting his official sentence, he was eager to see Jackie and bask in the glow of a job well done.

But his Publicist was nowhere to be found.

It seems that, unbeknownst to Jackie, Socrates was out of money. With all of the commissions he was paying to his representation, including his agent, manager, tour manager, stylist and various support staff, and now with attorney's fees on top of that, he was broke. Jackie had only now discovered this fact when her billing department informed her that her philosopher client was way behind in paying commission.

As his execution date approached, Socrates sent messenger after messenger to Jackie. None of his messages were returned. Jackie had officially dropped him as a client. Finally, confused, frustrated and exhausted, Socrates prepared himself for the end. Surrounded by prison guards, he took the poison-filled chalice and raised it to his lips. Just then one of the guards looked at Socrates and said, "So what happened to your Publicist?"

Socrates looked at the guard and replied, "Publicist? Don't get me started." The room fell silent for a moment. Then Socrates, with great profundity whispered, "And where the hell is my agent?"

And with that, Socrates Pappandreopoulos, philosopher, handyman and overexposed media icon, drank the hemlock and took his last breath.

Epilogue:

After his death, Socrates did indeed become quite famous. Of course, he was dead at that point, so it didn't really do much for him. On the other hand, it did wonders for his Publicist. Jackie went on to work with Aristotle, Pericles and an array of other local celebrities before marrying a marble tycoon and settling down in the posh neighborhood just beyond the Acropolis.

From This Is a Book by Demetri Martin, published by Grand Central Publishing in April.

"You don't have to say 'ah.'"

LINCECUM

(continued from page 62)

rode buses and the clubhouse buffet featured peanut butter sandwiches and ramen—in less than a year. Rockies prospect Ian Stewart called the five-foot-11, 170-pounder "the toughest pitcher I ever faced. Guys who've been in the big leagues call him the toughest they ever faced. That guy is filthy." In May 2007 Lincecum faced the Phillies in his major league debut. Ryan Howard and Shane Victorino took him very deep in an 8–5 loss. "I'll remember how far those balls went," he said.

The next season he went 18–5 to win his first Cy Young. It wasn't enough to impress his grizzled teammate Matt Morris. "You're still a rookie," Morris said.

"Come on, I've been in the league two years now."

"It's three years till you're not a rookie, rook."

Lincecum kept his mouth shut. The veterans could think what they wanted; he went to work on his changeup, throwing thousands until his straight overhand motion was exactly the same for his high-90s *queso* and a 10 mph slower change. Twitchy hitters would swing before the changeup arrived. He won 15 and lost seven in 2009, pacing the league in strikeouts again, holding opponents to a .206 average, leading the National League in wins above replacement, winning another Cy. Not even Morris (retired) was calling him rookie now. The Freak, whose mechanics defy decades of tradition—"People keep saying my motion's violent; I'm gonna get hurt"—refined his slider and zipped through the first half of 2010. An All-Star for the third straight time, he was 9–4 with a 3.16 at the break, soaking up the love he felt at home games. "When you get two strikes on a guy and the crowd's cheering, that sound can help you get the last one. It can get you through an inning, get you a win." He even enjoyed getting heckled on trips to New York and Philadelphia. "Those East Coast fans do their research! My teeth used to be pretty fucked-up, so they'd yell, 'Tim, you been chewing on rocks? Drinking beer with a straw?' I had to laugh." He got his teeth fixed, repaired his relationship with Posey and flashed his new pearlies at the Mets and Phillies as the Giants rolled to the postseason.

Meanwhile a Bay Area entrepreneur hawked T-shirts reminding people of Lincecum's weed bust. LET TIMMY SMOKE, the shirts read. Some guys would have sued. But when the shirtmaker pitched a bunch of them through the window of Lincecum's silver Mercedes, Timmy thanked him. He doesn't wear them—not because he hates the shirts but because it would smack of a jock cliché. "I'd be referring to myself in the third person. That'd be weird," he says. "I guess I'd need one that says LET ME SMOKE." But he's not going there, not after his run-in with the highway patrol.

Instead he goes up and down steps in

empty ballparks. Lincecum stepped up his workouts last fall. He wanted to get stronger in case the Giants made the Series for the first time since 2002. Now stadiums are his StairMasters. Between starts he'll slip into AT&T or some park on the road, warm up with a few stretches and then start jogging toward the upper deck. Up and down for miles, freaky footsteps echoing through empty stands. The upward trip builds hamstrings, quads and lower-core strength, while going down works calves, knees and stabilizers. He figures he needs to stay strong, particularly from the belly button down, to keep his violent motion from going haywire.

"It's not like I'm a pinpoint-accuracy guy." Not like the Phils' Cliff Lee and Roy Halladay, who walked 48 guys combined last year to Lincecum's 76. Unlike corner-painting control artists who prey on hitters' weaknesses, he rears back and fires as if to say "Try hitting this." "I'm more about my strength than the batter's weakness. I want to challenge you. That's what's fun." Hitters swear his four-seam fastball rises as it reaches the plate. That's supposed to be physically impossible ("It would take a shitload of backspin—maybe Aroldis Chapman could do it"), but the point is, it works. While some guys pitch to contact, hoping for ground balls, Lincecum makes you swing and miss. Year after year he fans more than a batter per inning. "The strike zone has four quadrants. I want to control them," he says. "I'll work the top of the zone with fastballs and the lower part with off-speed pitches. Throw a changeup inside or outside." In his first four big-league seasons, batters hit only .224 against him. Albert Pujols has done better: five for 14 for a .357 average. "But Pujols hasn't taken me deep. Knock on wood." Rockies part-timer Seth Smith has, though. Twice. Freaky game.

Timmy got a raise this year. His $14 million salary works out to $540,000 per biweekly paycheck, or about $62,000 per inning pitched. In December he spent about six weeks' pay on a $1.6 million condo with views of Seattle's Space Needle and Puget Sound, a championship pool table and a pair of video-game setups worthy of James Cameron. He's still driving the 2006 Mercedes he bought from a teammate, and the last time we talked he was rolling toward spring training, looking forward to stowing his hoodie and jeans in his corner of the Giants' rowdy clubhouse. On a typical day you'll find Barry Zito strumming a guitar in there, Brian "the Beard" Wilson playing dominoes and talking Spanish trash with some of the Latin players and Lincecum smacking the trackball on the *Golden Tee Golf* game. The starting pitcher gets to choose the clubhouse music; before Lincecum's starts it's MGMT, whose "Electric Feel" plays when he takes the mound.

Which he does his own way, of course. It may be as simple as telling an opponent he's awesome. "Down the stretch last year, when [Rockies shortstop Troy] Tulowitzki was hitting all those jacks—you had to get into it. I like whoever shines," says Lincecum, who still jumps off the couch when he sees himself on *SportsCenter*. On the field, instead of coolly toeing the rubber after blowing a batter away, he'll gawk at the radar-gun reading on the scoreboard. Damn, 98! Sometimes he'll do the same thing at the plate after striking out on 88 mph fastballs that seem as though they're going 150 mph. Although it annoys him to hear everyday players call pitchers "non-athletes," he hasn't proved them wrong yet. The career .130 hitter admits his idea of a hot streak is "a couple of lollipops over the infield."

Major league baseball allows pitchers to wear gold chains, puka shell necklaces and goggles while playing but not iPods. If that ever changes, Lincecum will be among the first to pitch with his tunes plugged into his ears. But earbuds may be redundant. The music's already in him. "Pitching is all about timing and rhythm," he says. "When I'm starting my motion early in the game, I can still hear my come-out song running through my head. Sometimes it goes away fast—they hit the ball hard or bloop a couple on you, and you wind up pitching like poop. But when it's right, it's like a song."

Check Lincecum's progress this year at facebook.com/timlincecum.

FRONT FOURS

How some pitchers fared in their first four major league seasons

CY YOUNG (1890–1893)

AGE	W–L	ERA	IP	K	BB	WAR	ERA+	Cy
23	9–7	3.47	147.2	39	30	1.7	100	—
24	27–22	2.85	423.2	147	140	6.3	121	—
25	36–12	1.93	453	168	118	12.6	176	—
26	34–16	3.36	422.2	102	103	10.4	146	—

WHAT HAPPENED: WON 511 GAMES IN 22 YEARS.

BABE RUTH (1914–1917)

19	2–1	3.91	23	3	7	-0.2	70	—
20	18–8	2.44	217.2	112	85	2.5	114	—
21	23–12	1.75	323.2	170	118	7.4	158	—
22	24–13	2.01	326.1	128	108	5.8	128	—

WHAT HAPPENED: BECAME FULL-TIME RIGHT FIELDER IN 1919.

HERB SCORE (1955–1958)

22	16–10	2.85	227.1	245	154	5.8	141	—
23	20–9	2.53	249.1	263	129	7.6	166	
24	2–1	2.00	36	39	26	1.6	190	
25	2–3	3.95	41	48	34	0.3	94	

WHAT HAPPENED: HIT IN THE FACE IN 1957.

TOM SEAVER (1967–1970)

22	16–13	2.76	251	170	78	6.4	122	
23	16–12	2.20	278	205	48	7.5	137	
24	25–7	2.21	273.1	208	82	7.6	165	X
25	18–12	2.82	290.2	283	83	6.0	143	

WHAT HAPPENED: WON 311 IN 20 YEARS WITH THREE CYS.

MARK FIDRYCH (1976–1979)

21	19–9	2.34	250.1	97	53	8.5	159	
22	6–4	2.89	81	42	12	2.3	149	
23	2–0	2.45	22	10	5	0.7	161	
24	0–3	10.43	14.2	5	9	-0.7	43	

WHAT HAPPENED: HURT KNEE AND ARM; DIED IN 2009.

DWIGHT GOODEN (1984–1987)

19	17–9	2.60	218	276	73	5.4	137	
20	24–4	1.53	276.2	268	69	11.7	229	X
21	17–6	2.84	250	200	80	4.4	126	
22	15–7	3.21	179.2	148	53	3.8	119	

WHAT HAPPENED: ELEVEN MISSED STARTS IN 1987 DUE TO COCAINE REHABILITATION.

TIM LINCECUM (2007–2010)

23	7–5	4.00	146.1	150	65	2.0	112	
24	18–5	2.62	227	265	84	6.9	169	X
25	15–7	2.48	225.1	261	68	6.3	173	X
26	16–10	3.43	212.1	231	76	3.5	119	

WHAT HAPPENED: 2–0 IN 2010 WORLD SERIES.

Carcassonne

(continued from page 54)

the most basic things about it. Not even whether it is red or white.

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Of all our senses, it is the one with the broadest application, from a brief impression on the tongue to a learned aesthetic response to a painting. It is also the one that most describes us. We may be better or worse people, happy or miserable, successful or failing, but what we *are,* within these wider categories, how we define ourselves, as opposed to how we are genetically defined, is what we call "taste." Yet the word—perhaps because of its broad catchment area—easily misleads. *Taste* can imply calm reflection, while its derivatives—*tasteful, tastefulness, tasteless, tastelessness*—lead us into a world of minute differentiations, of snobbery, social values and soft furnishings. True taste, essential taste, is much more instinctual and unreflecting. It says, Me, here, now, this, you. It says, Lower the boat and row me ashore. John Dowell, the narrator of Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier,* says of Nancy Rufford: "I just wanted to marry her as some people want to go to Carcassonne." Falling in love is the most violent expression of taste known to us.

And yet our language doesn't seem to represent that moment very well. We have no equivalent for "*coup de foudre,*" the lightning strike and thunderclap of love. We talk about there being "electricity" between a couple—but this is a domestic, not cosmic image, as if the pair should be practical and wear rubber soles on their shoes. We talk of "love at first sight," and indeed it happens, even in England, but the phrase makes it sound rather a polite business. We say that their eyes met across a crowded room. Again, how social it sounds. Across a crowded room. Across a crowded harbor.

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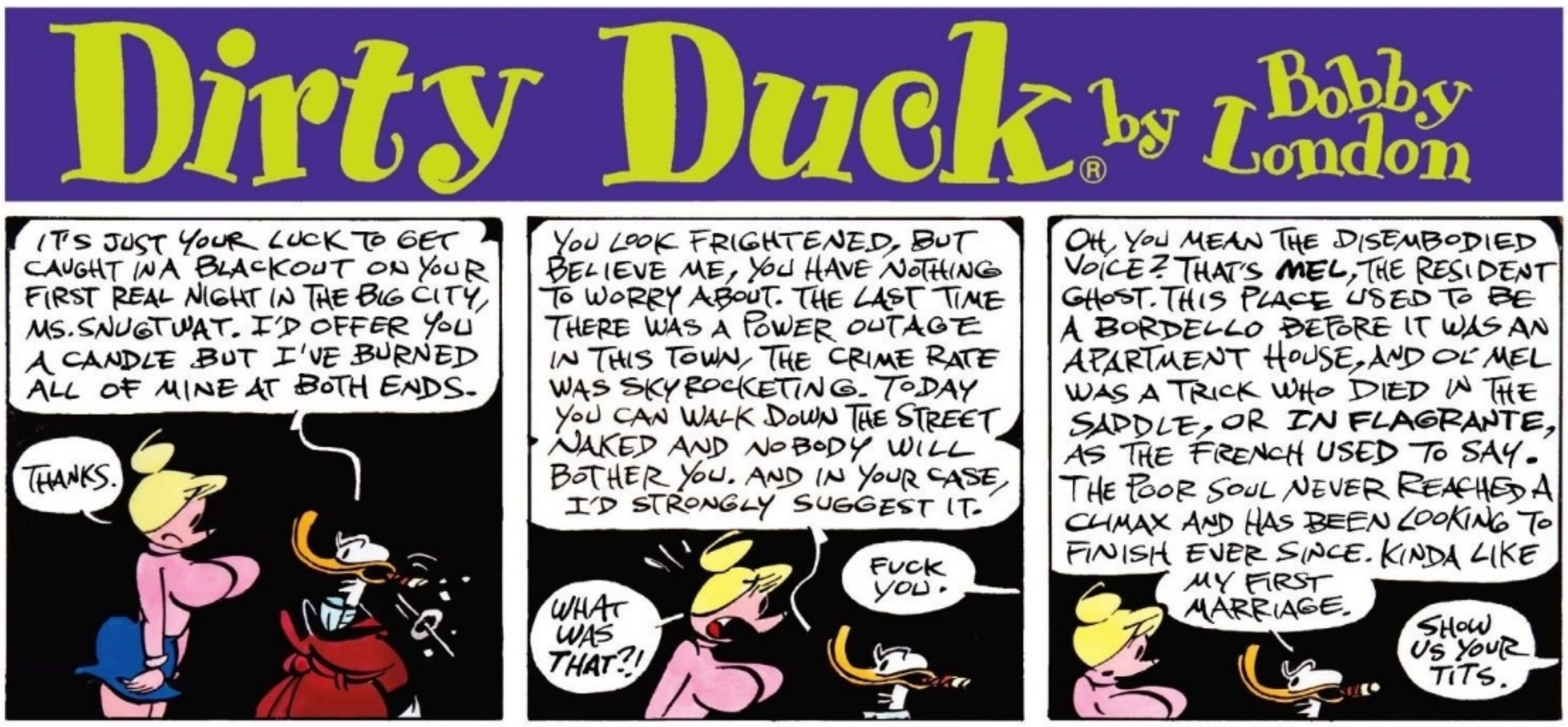
Anita Riberas didn't, in fact, die "on the breast of Garibaldi" but rather more mundanely, and less like a lithograph. She died while the liberator and three of his followers, each holding a corner of her mattress, were moving her from a cart into a farmhouse. Still, we should celebrate that moment with the telescope and all it led to. Because this is the moment—the moment of passionate taste—that we are after. Few of us have telescopes and harbors available, and in the rewinding of memory we may discover that even the deepest and longest love relationships rarely start with full recognition, with "you must be mine" pronounced in a foreign tongue. The moment itself may be disguised as something else: admiration, pity, office camaraderie, shared danger, a common sense of justice. Perhaps it is too alarming a moment to be looked in the face at the time; so perhaps the English language is right to avoid Gallic flamboyance. I once asked a man who had been long and happily married where he had met his wife. "At an office party," he replied. And what had been his first impression of her? "I thought she was very nice," he replied.

So how do we know to trust that moment of passionate taste, however camouflaged? We don't, even if we feel we must, that this is all we have to go on. A woman friend once told me, "If you took me into a crowded room and there was one man with NUTTER tattooed on his forehead, I'd walk straight across to him." Another, twice-married friend confided, "I've thought of leaving my marriage, but I'm so bad at choosing that I wouldn't have any confidence I'd do better next time, and that would be a depressing thing to learn." Who or what can help us in the moment that sets the wild echoes flying? What do we trust: the sight of a woman's feet in walking boots, the novelty of a foreign accent, a loss of blood to the fingertips followed by exasperated



self-criticism? I once went to visit a young married couple whose new house was astonishingly empty of furniture. "The problem," the wife explained, "is that he's got no taste at all and I've only got bad taste." I suppose that to accuse yourself of bad taste implies the latent presence of some sort of good taste. But in our love choices, few of us know whether or not we are going to end up in that house without furniture.

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When I first became part of a couple, I began to examine with more self-interest the progress and fate of other couples. By now I was in my early 30s, and some of my contemporaries who had met a decade earlier were already beginning to break up. I realized that the two couples whose relationships seemed to resist time, whose partners continued to show joyful interest in one another, were both—all four—gay men in their 60s. This may have been just a statistical oddity, but I used to wonder if there was a reason. Was it because they had avoided the long travail of parenthood, which often grinds down heterosexual relationships? Possibly. Was it something essential to their gayness? Probably not, judging from gay couples of my own generation. One thing separating these two couples from the rest was that for many years and in many countries their relationship would have been illegal. A bond made in such circumstances may well run deeper: I am committing my safety into your hands, every day of our lives together. Perhaps there is a literary comparison: Books written under oppressive regimes are often more highly valued than books written in societies where everything is permitted. Not that a writer should therefore pray for oppression, or a lover for illegality.

"I just wanted to marry her as some people want to go to Carcassonne." The first couple, T and H, met during the 1930s. T was from the English upper-middle classes, handsome, talented and modest. H came from a Jewish family in Vienna, who were so hard up that when he was a small boy (and his father fighting in the First World War), his mother gave him away to the poorhouse for several years. Later, as a young man, he met the daughter of an English textile magnate, who helped get him out of Austria before the Second World War. In England, H worked for the family firm and became engaged to the daughter. Then H met T under circumstances which T, rather coyly, refused to specify but which were life-changing from the start. "Of course," T told me after H's death, "all this was very new to me—I hadn't been to bed with anybody at all."

What, you might ask, about H's deserted fiancée? But this is a happy story: T told me that she had "a very good instinct" for what was going on, that in due course she fell in love with someone else and that the four of them became close and lifelong friends. H went on to become a successful clothes designer for a high-street chain, and on his death—given the liberal nature of this employer—T, who for decades had committed many illegal acts with his "Austrian friend," found himself in receipt of a widow's pension. When he told me all this, not long before his own death, two things struck me. The first was how dispassionately he narrated his own story; all his strongest emotions were aroused by the misfortunes and injustices of H's life before the two of them had met. And the second was a phrase he used when describing the arrival of H into his life. T said he was very bewildered "but sure of one thing: I was determined to marry H."

The other couple, D and D, were South African. D1 was formal, shy, highly cultured; D2 more flamboyant, more obviously gay, full of teasing and double entendres. They lived in Cape Town, had a house on Santorini and traveled widely. They had worked out how to live together down to the smallest detail: I remember them in Paris, explaining that as soon as they got to Europe they would always buy a large panettone on which to breakfast in their hotel room. (A couple's first task, it has always seemed to me, is to solve the problem of breakfast; if this can be worked out amicably, most other difficulties can too.) On one occasion D2 came to London by himself. Late in the evening, after drink had been taken and we were talking about provincial France, he suddenly confessed, "I had the best fucky-fuck of my life in Carcassonne." It was not a line you would easily forget, particularly since he described how there had been a storm brewing, and at what the French call *le moment suprême,* there was an enormous roll of thunder overhead—a *coup de foudre* indeed. He didn't say he had been with D1 at the time, and because he didn't, I assumed he hadn't. After he died, I put his words into a novel, though with some hesitation about the accompanying weather, which raised the frequent literary problem of the *vrai* versus the *vraisemblable*. Life's astonishments are frequently literature's clichés. A couple of years later, I was on the phone to D1 when he alluded to this line and asked where I had got it from. Worrying at my possible betrayal, I admitted that D2 had been my source. "Ach," said D1 with sudden warmth, "we had such a *wonderful* time in Carcassonne." I felt relief; also a kind of surrogate nostalgia about the fact that they had been together.

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For some, the sunlight catches on the telescope out there in the lagoon; for others, not. We choose, we are chosen, we are unchosen. I said to my friend who always picked nutters that maybe she should look for a nice nutter. She replied, "But how could I tell one?" Like most people, she believed what lovers told her until there was a good reason not to. For several years she went out with a nutter who always left promptly for the office; only toward the end of the relationship did she discover that his first appointment of the day was always with his shrink. I said, "You've just had bad luck." She said, "I don't want it to be luck. If it's luck, there's nothing I can do about it." People say that in the end you get what you deserve, but that phrase cuts both ways. People say that in modern cities there are too many terrific women and too many terrible men. The city of Carcassonne looks solid and enduring, but what we admire is mostly 19th century reconstruction. Forget the hazard of "whether it will last" and whether longevity is in any case a virtue, a reward, an accommodation or

another piece of luck. How much do we act, and how much are we acted upon, in that moment of passionate taste?

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And we shouldn't forget that Garibaldi had a second wife (also a third—though we may ignore her). His 10 years with Anita Riberas were followed by 10 years of widowhood. Then, in the summer of 1859, during his Alpine campaign, he was fighting near Varese when a message was brought to him through the Austrian lines by an 18-year-old girl driving alone in a gig. She was Giuseppina Raimondi, the illegitimate daughter of Marquis Raimondi. Garibaldi was immediately smitten, wrote her a passionate letter, declared his love on bended knee. He admitted the difficulties to any union between them: He was nearly three times her age, already had another child by a peasant woman and feared that Giuseppina's aristocratic background might not play well with his political image. But he convinced himself (and her), to the extent that on December 3, 1859, as a later historian than Trevelyan worded it, "She put aside her doubts and entered his room. The deed was done!" Like Anita, she was evidently dashing and brave; on January 24, 1860, they were married—in this instance, with the full dogma of the Catholic Church.

Tennyson met Garibaldi on the Isle of Wight four years later. The poet greatly admired the liberator but also noted that he had "the divine stupidity of a hero." This second marriage—or rather, Garibaldi's illusions about it—lasted (according to which authority you believe) either a few hours or a few days, the time it took for the bridegroom to receive a letter detailing his new wife's past. Giuseppina, it turned out, had begun taking lovers at the age of 11; she had married Garibaldi only at the insistence of her father; she had spent the night before her wedding with her most recent lover, by whom she was pregnant; and she had precipitated sexual events with her husband-to-be so that she could write to him on January 1 and claim to be carrying his child.

Garibaldi demanded not just an immediate separation but an annulment. The romantic hero's deeply unromantic reasoning was that since he had slept with Giuseppina only before the wedding and not after, the marriage had technically not been consummated. The law was unimpressed by such sophistry, and Garibaldi's appeal to higher influences, including the king, also failed. The liberator found himself shackled to Giuseppina for the next 20 years.

In the end, the law is only ever defeated by lawyers; in place of the romantic telescope, the legal microscope. The freeing argument, when it was eventually found, ran like this: Since Garibaldi's marriage had been solemnized in territory nominally under Austrian control, the law governing it might therefore be construed as the Austrian civil code, under which an annulment was (and perhaps always had been) possible. So the hero-lover was saved by the very nation against whose rule he had been fighting at the time. The distinguished lawyer who proposed this ingenious solution had, back in 1860, prepared the legislative unification of Italy; now, he achieved the marital disunification of the nation's unifier. Let us salute the name of Pasquale Stanislao Mancini.

From Pulse: Stories by Julian Barnes, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf in May.

"Hon, this is my bedroom. You have your own bedroom down the hall."

ED HELMS

(continued from page 87)

your hotel room. But I don't have a lot of hang-ups about that stuff. I feel pride and dignity usually get in the way when you're trying to do comedy.

Q4

PLAYBOY: *The Hangover Part II* was shot almost entirely in Bangkok, a city with a reputation for red-light districts and anything-goes debauchery. Did you partake?

HELMS: Not really. We exploited its dark underbelly with great enthusiasm in the movie. We shot in some interesting neighborhoods, what you might call "sketchy," that most tourists probably wouldn't visit. You take a vacation to a place like Thailand and you're ready for the excitement of something new and foreign. But when you're working 14-hour days, all you want is something familiar to ground you. And there's just nothing there. Even the American things, such as Starbucks or a hamburger joint, felt different in Bangkok.

Q5

PLAYBOY: After being in two alcohol-fueled *Hangover* movies, do you find your fans are constantly trying to buy you booze and get you drunk?

HELMS: If I'm in a bar, frat boys will usually try to buy me shots. But I'm not much of a boozer anymore. I certainly had my share of ragers during my 20s, but I think it had more to do with geography than age. I lived in New York City for most of my 20s, and then I moved to Los Angeles when I was 32 or 33. L.A. is all about automobiles, and New York is about public transportation or taxis. So alcohol consumption isn't as automatic as it was when I was in New York.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Do you remember your last painful hangover?

HELMS: For me it's less about the physical effects than the remorse. I think I'm a fairly obnoxious drunk, so I'll wake up the next morning just racked with guilt, replaying every conversation I had the night before and every terrible thing that came out of my mouth. I read that's part of the chemical process of alcohol going through your body. It engenders feelings of guilt and depression.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Your character gets a face tattoo in *The Hangover Part II*. Have you ever been tempted to get some real body ink?

HELMS: I don't have any real tattoos, and I'm not interested in getting any. But it's so much fun having a tattoo when it's not permanent. Especially when it's on your face. Walking around the streets of Bangkok with a face tattoo, I felt like the biggest badass. I felt like no one would mess with me, and if they did, I could crush them. Of course, if somebody did start fucking with me, I would probably start weeping and run away.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You had a tooth removed for the

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first *Hangover* movie. How did you convince a dentist this was a good idea?

HELMS: It was actually just a dental implant. I'd thought about replacing it for a while. My teeth had shifted, and it just didn't feel like the best fit anymore. I said to my dentist, "Can I get a new cap on this implant? And in the interim, can we leave it out for two months while I shoot a movie?" He was like, "Sure, that's fine." The funny thing is, I had to wear a retainer for the scenes in which the tooth isn't gone yet. It was like a flipper with a fake tooth. And my speech was slightly affected. We were still shooting *The Office* during the movie, and I didn't tell them about it because I didn't want to get into trouble. Somehow I got away with it.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Andy Bernard, the character you play on *The Office,* has way too much self-confidence even though it's not always deserved. Do you envy his shamelessness or cringe at it?

HELMS: I love it. This may come as a surprise, given the nature of my job, but I am very guarded and contemplative. I'm not a naturally boisterous person. Andy Bernard is a bit of a wish fulfillment for me, because I absolutely envy how passionate he is. If Andy's in love with somebody, everybody knows it. He just puts it out there. It's his saving grace, in the midst of all his other social handicaps.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Andy likes coming up with nicknames for his co-workers, like Big Tuna and Big Turkey. We heard that your nickname in high school was Chuck E. Cheese. Care to explain?

HELMS: Oh God. Yes, that's true. It came from an upperclassman who claimed I looked like Chuck E. Cheese, the mascot from that chintzy pizza restaurant chain. Any good nickname recipient shouldn't actually like his nickname, and that was certainly the case with me. I hated being called Chuck E. Cheese. And of course that just encouraged them. Thank you for bringing it up. I'm sure it'll catch on once again and ruin my life.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Andy Bernard loves to brag about being a Cornell University alumnus. Last March his likeness and boisterous claim—"I went to Cornell...ever heard of it?"—were used to promote Cornell's law school on its website. If you were a potential Cornell student, would Andy's endorsement help or hurt?

HELMS: I think it's great, because it shows that Cornell has a sense of humor about itself. It's perfectly harmless. At the same time, there's something a little ridiculous about an institution of higher learning celebrating a fictional character who is known for not living up to the standards of that university. For any thinking person, Andy's endorsement should be absolutely meaningless.

Q12

PLAYBOY: A few years ago you attended an *Office* convention in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where your fictional Dunder Mifflin paper company office is located. What are the hard-core fans really like?

HELMS: They're pretty extreme, man. At that convention we were like the Beatles for a weekend. We had a police escort just to get around town, and everywhere we went there was a round of applause. At one point I was in a car with [*Office* co-star] Angela Kinsey in downtown Scranton, and we passed a model-train store. I asked the driver to stop so we could go in. And before we knew it, fans were starting to pour in. A cop eventually showed up and said, "Everyone out." And they shut down this store so Angela and I could walk around and look at model trains. That was just crazy to me. I thought that shit only happened to Justin Bieber.

Q13

PLAYBOY: On *The Daily Show* you played a correspondent named Ed Helms, who was kind of a douche bag. Did people always know the difference between the real Ed Helms and the satirical Ed Helms?

HELMS: I honestly don't know. It's such a weird medium, because you're kind of defining yourself publicly as this person. But of course it's a comedy and you hope the audience understands you're being silly and ridiculous. I'm sure some people thought I was the incredibly smug prick I played on the show. Sometimes we rode the line, and there were some things I regret in hindsight.

Q14

PLAYBOY: Can we assume the thing you regret is the Nutcam, the hidden scrotum camera you wore during a segment?

HELMS: Not at all. I'm very proud of the Nutcam. In fact, I'll spoil the mystery. A good magician never shares his secrets, but nobody ever accused me of being a good magician. I wasn't actually wearing that Speedo with the camera in it. We put two golf balls in the front of the swimsuit and hung it on the hood of the camera so the balls dangled in front of the lens, just at the top of the frame. And then we walked around with it at waist level. Sorry if I ruined it for you.

Q15

PLAYBOY: What is Jon Stewart like as a boss?

HELMS: I think the best way to describe Jon is how I once described him in a segment on the show. He's a mixture of Hitler and Willy Wonka. [*laughs*] I don't even know what that means. In any environment in which everyone is putting out a lot of creativity, there will be tension at times, because not all of it works and you won't always agree on what works. You have to throw a hundred darts at the board and maybe 10 of them will stick. Is that a good metaphor? I'm having second thoughts.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You're working on a screenplay for a film about Civil War reenactors, in which you hope to star. Have you ever taken part in a reenactment?

HELMS: I've attended a few but just as a spectator. The people involved are so

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passionate about the Civil War. Whenever somebody is truly passionate about something, no matter how silly or absurd it seems to everybody else, that's admirable. Unless it's a fascist dictator or something. In that case, passion is not as cool.

Q17

PLAYBOY: You often invite your parents to visit you on the sets of your movies and TV shows. Have they ever seen something they shouldn't?

HELMS: Oh sure. As I mentioned, pride and dignity are the enemies of comedy. And that's not always something you want to share with your parents. Both my mom and dad have been phenomenally supportive over the years. Even when I think they're embarrassed by something I've done, which is probably frequently, they're respectful and gracious. They got upset with me only once. I did a segment on *The Daily Show* where I go to a brothel in Pahrump, Nevada. At one point I'm literally chasing a gaggle of prostitutes around a swimming pool while wearing a cowboy hat, a necktie and a Speedo. When my mom saw it she was like, "Maybe you went too far." And she's probably right, God bless her. I should listen to my mom more often.

Q18

PLAYBOY: You were in an a cappella group in college called the Oberlin Obertones. Were you contemplating a career in music?

HELMS: I never thought about singing professionally, but being in that group was very gratifying creatively. There's a funny thing about a cappella: It's so much fun to sing, but I don't think it's nearly as interesting to listen to. You do these shows and have a great time and think you're killing it, but most of the people in the audience are probably there only because they know someone in the group. The entertainment value of a cappella is questionable.

Q19

PLAYBOY: You've played the banjo a few times on *The Office,* but you haven't serenaded anybody in a while. You haven't given up the banjo, have you?

HELMS: Not at all. I love the banjo and I love bluegrass music. When it's used comedically, the banjo sounds so goofy and wacky. But I don't think it always works. At least I haven't seen many people pull it off. Steve Martin's the exception, obviously.

Q20

PLAYBOY: Steve Carell, who plays Michael Scott, the goofball boss on *The Office,* is leaving this year. Does Andy Bernard have what it takes to get a promotion and become the new manager at Dunder Mifflin?

HELMS: I don't know. Andy's an intrinsically sweet guy, but he's also kind of desperate for approval and very short-tempered. Too much responsibility and he might get more stressed out and susceptible to, as he likes to say, losing his freakin' mind. So no, I don't think management would be a good fit for him.

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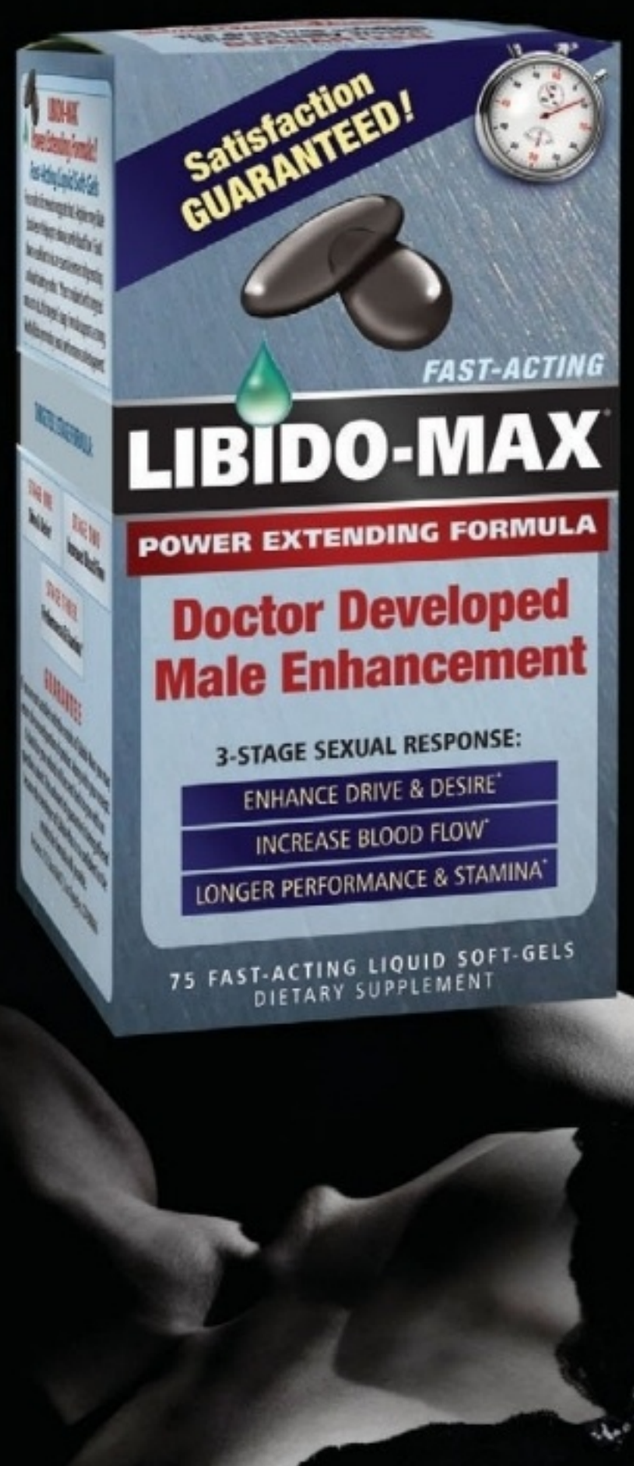

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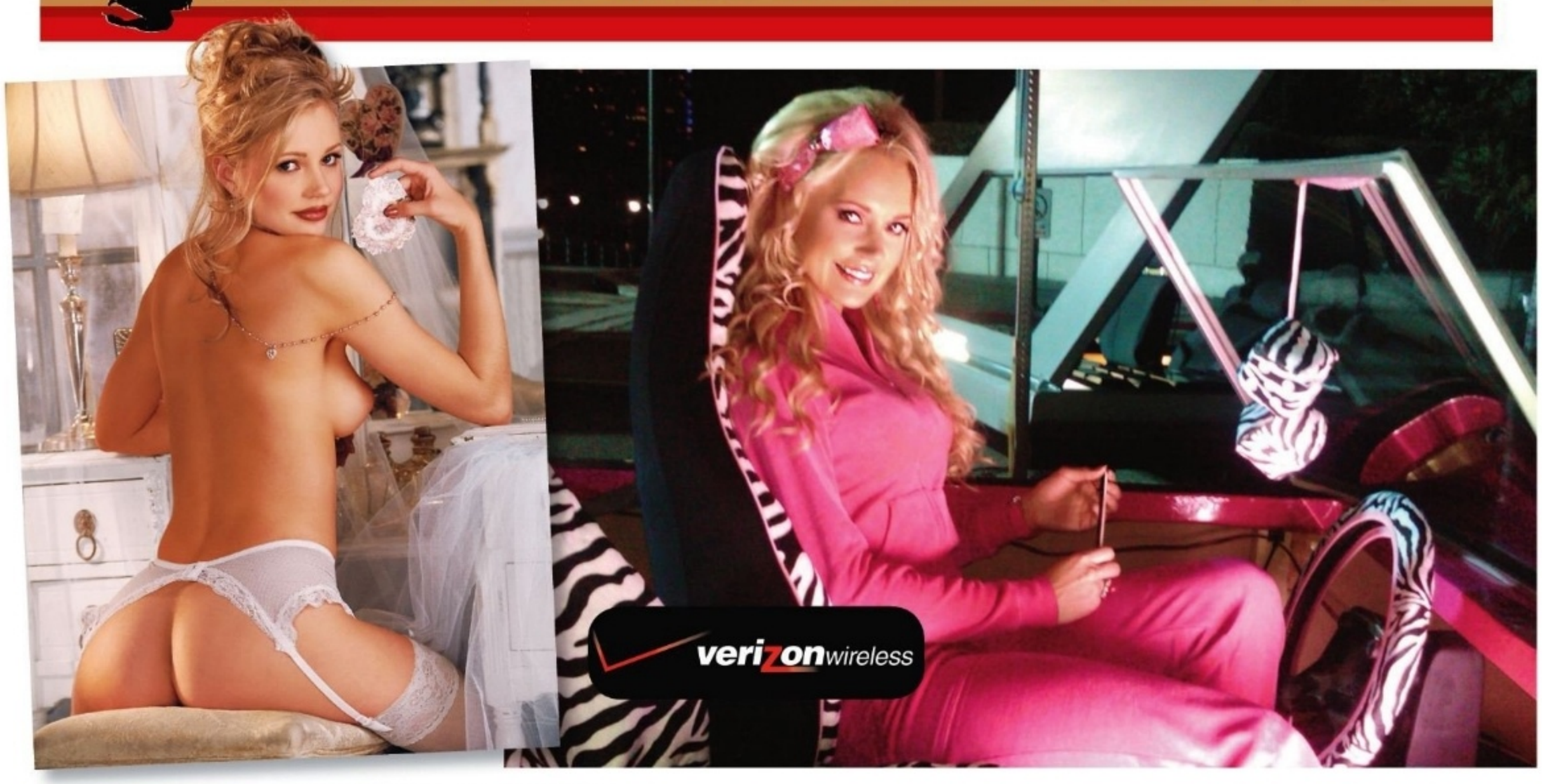

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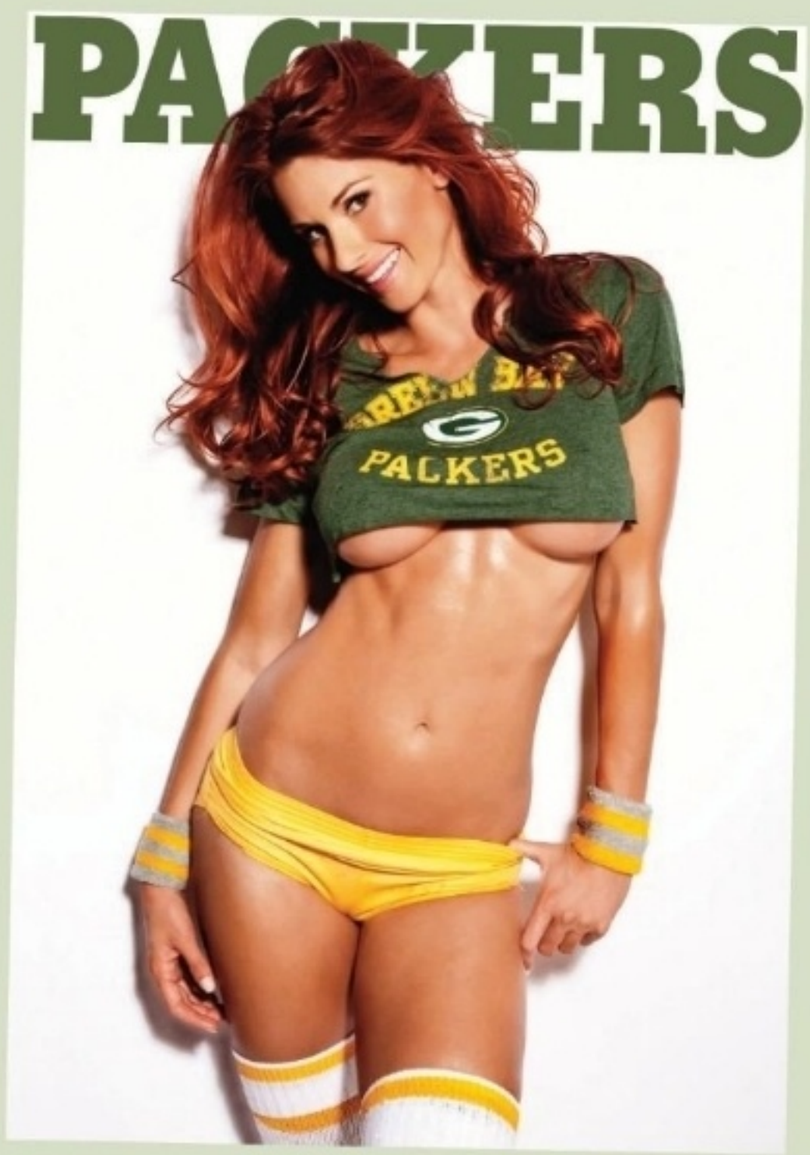
Verizon Wireless tapped Miss February 1999 Stacy Fuson to drive a pink car replete with zebra-print interior for the company's new commercial. She was cast as the stereotypical blonde, which played slightly against character for Stacy, who is anything but typical. She jokes, "My favorite thing about shooting commercials is craft services! Thankfully, I was in a pink tracksuit instead of something more tight and revealing."

SUPERBABE

Former Dolphins cheerleader cum Miss January 2010 Jaime Faith Edmondson had a Super Bowl on par with Aaron Rodgers's. In the weeks leading up to the big game she posed for team pinups on thesmokingjacket.com, making her the belle of the playoffs. She then headed to Dallas to hype the Playboy Super Bowl Party on national radio, and on game day she played Packers coach Mike McCarthy's snubbed high school cheerleader girlfriend on ESPN's *Mayne Event*. "It was unbelievable, especially since I am a 12-year-old boy trapped in a woman's body," Jaime says of the whole experience. "If I didn't have a vagina I would be a pro bowler."



FLASHBACK

Fifteen years ago this month we presented San Diego beauty Miss May 1996 **Shauna Sand.** She had appeared on the TV show *Renegade* alongside Lorenzo Lamas, who married Shauna when her issue hit newsstands. Their relationship yielded three daughters and was subjected to a hailstorm of tabloid coverage. Shauna also appeared on *Charmed*, *Air America* and *Las Vegas*. Currently, she can be seen on *TMZ*, where she is a favorite for her good looks, interesting fashion choices and repartee with the paparazzi.

Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club at club.playboy.com and access the mobile-optimized site playboy.com from your phone.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hugh M. Hefner and Miss December 2009 **Crystal Harris** will be wed at the Playboy Mansion on June 18.

Miss October 2010 **Claire Sinclair** has booked a week of encore performances at Crazy Horse Paris, beginning April 20.

The opera based on PMOY 1993 **Anna Nicole Smith** ran at London's Royal Opera House this past season.

"I didn't have to work out before I turned 35, but now I do, so it's treadmill,

Bikram yoga, watching what I eat and, of course, great sex," says PMOY 1994 Jenny McCarthy. "Lots of great sex!"

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY JAMIE REIDY

—author of *Hard Sell: The Evolution of a Viagra Salesman*, the inspiration for the film *Love and Other Drugs*

"My favorite Playmate is Miss June 1981 Cathy Larmouth. Her glasses, the half-opened work shirt, the garters underneath her skirt—it all hinted at what lay beneath those buttoned-up yuppies. Her spread hit a lot of hot-button issues I didn't know I had. Years later, at Pfizer, I nearly lost it when I spotted all the saleswomen in their pantsuits. Maybe Cathy was secretly responsible for my attraction to corporate types."

PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Playmate of the Year 2010 Hope Dworaczyk and PLAYBOY cover model Kelly Brook teamed up at the Funky Buddha in London to launch the Playboy Energy Drink across the pond. Kelly accentuated her curves with a side-revealing dress, while Hope (who lost her luggage on the flight over) was able to find a sexy strapless number in a pinch. The airline took nearly a week to reunite Hope with her bags, but luckily she didn't require clothes for one of those days, when we shot a pictorial with the *Celebrity Apprentice* starlet.... Miss February 1990 Pamela Anderson looked lovely as she led sports agent Jordan Woy down the red carpet at the Dallas Superbash 2011, presented by Willis & Woy Sports Group. The function was held at the Fashion Industry Gallery just prior to the Super Bowl.

Pamela, who auctioned herself off for two dates, told the media before going on the block, "I'd be lucky if I got a $5,000 bid." She ended up commanding $17,000, which went to the charity Waves for Water.... Playmate of the Year 2008 Jayde Nicole lit up the red carpet alongside actor Verne Troyer at the PokerStars Caribbean Adventure at Atlantis Resort & Casino. The event raised money for the HIV/AIDS awareness organization amfAR. Also at the tournament were Ricki Lake, Kevin Dillon and Orel Hershiser.... Two great things about being the child of a Playmate: great bone structure in your genes and entry into cool events. Miss December 2001 Shanna Moakler took her children, Atiana de la Hoya, Alabama Barker (who got into the spirit with a princess costume and tiara) and Landon Barker, to the *Beauty and the Beast* sing-along at Walt Disney Studios.

OUR GIRLS ON FILM

Somewhere, the film debut of Misses July and August 2009 Karissa and Kristina Shannon, is now available on DVD. In Sofia Coppola's drama the blondes play strippers, and Kristina is also a love interest of the lead character. "Sofia just went on the computer and googled *twins*," Kristina told NBC. "We're like the only hot twins out there besides the Olsen twins." The picture won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival, and the girls were a perfect fit. "I relate to my character," Kristina says. "She's a twin; she's humorous, sexy and a playful girl next door."

QUEEN OF ENGLAND

After her stint on the U.K. show *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!* Brits everywhere fell in love with Miss August 2008 Kayla Collins. Happily, the feeling is mutual, as she told British lad mag *Zoo:* "Oh my God, I love English boys. Even if you're not a chivalrous guy over here, it still seems like you are because you can be so proper." Now we affect an accent around her.

Miss January 2004 Colleen Shannon is spinning records at the Pool at Harrah's Resort in Atlantic City on May 25.

Rumors are swirling that Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco is leaving *General Hospital*, and our girlfriends are quite upset.

DID YOU KNOW?

KOVACS

(continued from page 92)

monkeys—and who doesn't like monkeys?—playing instruments—and who doesn't like monkeys playing instruments?—bonking one another on the head—and who doesn't like monkeys playing instruments and bonking one another on the head? But these monkeys, really men in monkey suits (one long rumored to be Jack Lemmon) and dressed in heavy overcoats, are also, in some uncanny conflation, windup figures in some sort of infernal device. That's to say, at some semiconscious level we register the Nairobi Trio as emblems of eternity, doomed to their slow-burn enactment until the solar system implodes.

3. Poets, a fierce and suspicious lot, don't like being made fun of. Yet every poet I know adores Percy Dovetonsils, Kovacs's affectionately devastating charade of a cocktail-sipping, loopily lisping connoisseur of doltish rhyme. One poet I know signs his correspondence Percy Dovetonsils.

4. The offhand danger contained in Kovacs's work is that once his sensibility has colonized a certain cultural matter, it stands no chance of ever being retrieved for serious purpose. I have had to take it on faith my whole life that the song "Mack the Knife" conveys some sultry essence of decadence or menace; for me, thanks to Kovacs's use of it as a complement to an endless sequence of stupid sight gags (which are in turn somehow exalted into a weird aura of decadence or menace by the song) it is like having my arms held behind my back while I am tickled. *Swan Lake* was always done in gorilla outfits, no? Who could ever read *Camille* now without hearing a cough? When I first learned that an important cinematographer was named László Kovács I had trouble believing I wasn't being kidded, that László whoever-he-was hadn't picked the surname sheerly as a joke.

5. Not unrelated, Ernie Kovacs wrote for *Mad* magazine. Of course he did.

6. Ernie Kovacs wrote a novel, he claimed, in 13 days. The subject was the New York television rat race; he turned it in just before moving to Los Angeles, and when his publisher asked when he'd do the copy edits, he quipped, "On the first rainy day." In fact, it was a sudden Los Angeles rain that likely caused Kovacs to crash his car the night he died. Either that or he was trying to light his cigar while driving in the rain.

Enough of my morbid and sentimental list, which could go on forever. Here's the mystery: Putting aside how Kovacs makes you laugh (and it should be said that much of his work is too conceptual and deliberate and even awkward to be smoothly seductive to the viewer's hilarity; it often presents itself as humorous while actually being both interesting and uncomfortably odd), his great claim, his great indisputable achievement is as an excavator of a new medium's possibilities. Kovacs is to videotaped television what D.W. Griffith and later Orson Welles are to narrative in projected celluloid, what McCartney-Lennon and George Martin are to eight-track tape recording in pop music, what Hank Shocklee is to digital sampling in hip-hop: one of those artists whose personal expressivity takes the form of a series of astonishing and playful demonstrations of what a medium's potential—and true nature—might be. If we take this as a given, and I think it's impossible not to on the evidence, then the mystery is how an artist defined by his place within a medium rightly characterized by media theorist Marshall McLuhan as "cool" and whose explorations seem in so many ways to prove McLuhan exactly right, moving as they do in the direction of postmodern fragmentation, of parody, of repetition, of irony, of disruption of convention without convention's replacement by new frameworks, instead by an increasingly rapid series of subsequent disruptions; and if we further agree that most of Ernie Kovacs's avowed inheritors—from *Laugh-In* and Monty Python to video art to Carson and Letterman and beyond—are unquestionably "cool" in temperature (elusive, ironical, uncommitted), the mystery is this: How is it that Kovacs, our human guide into this cool world, is himself such an almost unbearable figure of *warmth*? You feel you know this guy from somewhere else and that you'd like to be inside the television *with* him; that's what's odd. Watching, you feel his anger, his ambition, his joy, his nearly violent curiosity, his impatience, his terror of screwing up; all are worn right on the outermost surface of his being. Even self-amusement, usually the iciest part of a comic's persona and therefore either carefully hidden or brandished as a fuck-you (think Groucho and Letterman again), in Kovacs is an element drawing you nearer. There are a few moments in his work when he breaks down and laughs for a while at something invisible to the viewer either because it lies outside the frame or because it hides somewhere inside his head, and you kind of want them to go on forever. That's it, the whole mystery I want to outline and that I don't purport to solve: how it can be that Ernie Kovacs generates such an astounding degree of *love* in the viewer that you'd almost rather see him laugh than laugh yourself.

"Somebody call 911!"

CHAIRMAN WOW

HOW CHINA BECAME MASTER OF THE WORLD ECONOMY

BY TED C. FISHMAN

Hu Jintao is president of China and paramount leader of the world's most robust—and eventually largest—economy. But he must suffer the endless droning of U.S. politicians, business executives and workers who feel threatened by China's rise. When Hu spent four days in the United States in late January, President Obama picked up the shopworn presidential notes of his predecessors to scold Hu on China's disregard for "the universality of certain rights: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly." Obama also offered the usual stern complaints about China's business practices but was far more polite than George W. Bush had been. The Obama White House hosted a state dinner for China's leader, which President Bush had not, and when the national anthem of the People's Republic was played, Obama's announcer did not misidentify it, as Bush's had, as the anthem of Taiwan. Not that Obama's dinner did not have weird moments: Obama, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was giving a party for the man who is, in effect, jailer to another Nobel Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo.

Because the world's most important bilateral relationship is not important to them, Speaker of the House John Boehner and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid declined to attend the state dinner. Hu met congressional leaders on Capitol Hill the next day for less cordial rounds of lectures on the same old topics. This was after Reid, in a televised interview, referred to the Chinese leader as a dictator and then immediately backtracked.

WELCOME TO AMERICA

It is amazing the Chinese president agreed to meet with Congress. It must have felt to Hu like going to a high school in a faraway town and agreeing to be reprimanded by a principal he'd never met because Hu's football team had a better record than his. And by the way, the principal's school owes Hu's school a lot of money. Hu sat through the lectures by American leaders, weighed their comments silently, quietly defended his country a couple of times and went back home to power China into the future.

How much more entertaining the visit would have been if America's leaders had some plan of action. Tariffs, quotas and fiscal policies that would inflate the Chinese economy could change how China's economic game puts the U.S. at a disadvantage, but only if they are credible threats. When it comes to human rights, it is hard to see how the U.S. could again amass the moral authority to act on behalf of China's

people. The Chinese throw references to our huge prison population at home, our prison camps abroad and our torture scandals right back at us.

The U.S. has rarely acted on its complaints. Except for imposing a few ineffectual quotas and tariffs, the U.S. did nothing as 2.5 million or more American industrial jobs were lost or went to Chinese workers. During Hu's political lifetime he has seen inaction in Washington joined by huge investment by American firms that like China's authoritarian stability, its ability to suppress unrest and the cover it gives foreign firms, once inside the country, to pilfer technology as local Chinese firms do.

Should we admire China? Certainly. The country has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and raised the average income of its population roughly sixfold in 15 years. It is one of the great achievements of modern history. Anyone who discounts the success of a country that has built roads, cities, giant industries and a sophisticated and extensive military-industrial complex doesn't understand what governments are meant to do.

CHINESE POWER

The Chinese government is brutally tough on its critics at home, it oppresses non-Chinese ethnic groups within its borders, it is rife with corruption (particularly on the local level), it is often a graceless bully in international affairs and it enables financial practices the rest of the world thinks unfair. But if the measure of good government is to make a nation's people richer, smarter and happier, China deserves our admiration. By some basic measures, China's past couple of decades deserve better grades than ours. Americans' incomes and overall wealth have not moved much at all, while those of the Chinese have had a meteoric climb. (Per capita income in China is still less than one tenth that in the U.S.) We show the world the limits of our economic and military might while China impresses on the world the potential of its wealth and power. China is a major supplier of arms and militarily useful technology. Most infamously, China supplied nuclear technology to Pakistan, which developed nuclear weapons with it. India, Japan and Indonesia worry about China's military clout and turn to the U.S. for stronger strategic partnerships, but that's a measure of China's strength, too.

MAO'S LEGACY

Modern market-driven China is in large part a reaction to the failures of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the death and misery he commanded. There is little about this modern Chinese economy Mao would envy. The divide between China's privileged and its huge impoverished class is among the widest in the world. Intellectuals, reviled under Mao, help lead the country's advancement. China's most important partners are now the capitalists Mao sought to vanquish. But by other measures, Mao has been triumphant. He was an ardent nationalist, and China's rising status would please him.

Teng Hsiao-p'ing (left) made China an economic tiger. President Barack Obama and Chinese president Hu Jintao (center) were cordial in Washington. In many ways, the vision of Mao Tse-tung (right) has prevailed.

It is hard to overstate how deeply China was refashioned under the rule of Mao Tse-tung and his successors from 1949 to 1978. The Maoists ruined China's economy. The country was all but bankrupt by the time Teng Hsiao-p'ing, architect of China's turn toward a capitalist future, took control. Its people were desperately poor. In 1978, 125 million people lived on less than $77 a year. (From 1980 to the present, as many as 400 million Chinese have been lifted above the dollar-a-day world standard.) Mao, who believed in the virtue of instability, remade a people who traditionally stuck to their hometowns, stayed within their own social strata and did the same backbreaking toil—the vast majority of Chinese were peasant farmers—as their forebears. Under Mao China's peasant class was taught to move into factory work and to build roads and bridges. Over the past decade about 200 million Chinese moved into the nation's cities and industrial regions. Every one of those workers became an additional head to count in the world's industrial labor force. They accepted astonishingly low wages by Western standards, but a few dollars a day to a new Chinese industrial worker could quadruple a family's income.

RESHAPING THE FAMILY

These mobilizations for Chinese development—whether as a revolutionary state or as a capitalist power—have also reshaped the Chinese family. Under Mao, especially in the era of mass collectivization, when city dwellers were sent far from their homes to live among farmers and proletarian workers, the state demonized the Chinese family as an enemy of reform. Mothers were distanced from their children or given limited access in communal living arrangements. These policies, which helped bankrupt the state, now help make China a world beater.

MARKET REFORM

As the era of market reform began, China instituted a one-child-per-family policy, which dramatically drove down birthrates. The state and party superseded the intimate wishes of families. Officialdom could insert its public agenda into citizens' private lives. From an economic perspective, smaller families freed young adult workers to move away from home and toil long hours in factories. The parents the workers left at home could be enlisted to care for children. That way when employers—foreign and domestic—hired Chinese employees, they gained two workers for the price of one. They gained a low-wage worker and also got that worker's parents, who provided free child care while the young worker manned his or her post.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

The Chinese workplace shifted from the iron rice bowl—which provided paid child care, meals, health care and education—to a system that instead put the burden on the family. The Chinese people have suffered enormous strains as a result but have been willing to endure them as long as the promised prosperity materializes. China still has a way to go; hundreds of millions of Chinese number among the world's poorest people. The combination of

prosperity and China's vast population will propel the country to an even stronger future.

REAL ESTATE

Mao expropriated all the private land in China and bestowed it on the government. With the nation as sole landlord, the reformed Chinese government could dole out land and extract rent from those willing to develop it. The effects are visible in Shanghai, which may be the world's most modern and bustling city. Before Teng took power it was a sleepy metropolis neglected by communist rulers who distrusted the well-educated Shanghainese. In the early 1990s the government leased out land for development to speed the rejuvenation of the city and built roads and bridges with the proceeds. It leased these out as well and rolled the money into more projects. The rest of China has developed along similar lines. The government tells officials to stoke growth; they roll public property into lucrative deals, skim off some of the money and begin the process again. For China this form of corruption pushes growth rather than thwarts it. The government has steered the process skillfully, and revolutionary China's seizure of property matched with modern China's kleptocratic state apparatus is inseparable from its economic miracle. (The West never protests these practices, but because they have resulted in the expulsion of millions of people from their homes, they are a sore point in China's political culture. When the Chinese protest publicly it is often over landgrabs that displace residents and benefit officials.)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual-property piracy is another kind of expropriation that enriches China. Chinese officials argue that the Chinese people need to be taught what is wrong with copying copyrighted books, music and movies and stealing brand names, logos, software and industrial designs and processes. It isn't part of Chinese culture, they say, to recognize such non-material goods as anything but public property. The rise of Chinese technology firms with their own potential to create innovative products is changing this view of intellectual property. But it goes only partway, largely protecting Chinese innovators while doing little to protect foreign products.

Estimates by the U.S. software industry put the cost of software piracy at more than $7 billion, but that may not count the most important cost. When Chinese firms (or U.S. firms working in China) get all the software they want for free—along with copycat industrial machinery that sells for a fraction of patented machines—their production costs are lowered. That adds to the irresistible lure of low-cost Chinese manufacturing and the inexorable flow of jobs out of the U.S.

It's hard to see a U.S. president or Congress wrestling seriously with intellectual-property theft by the Chinese. The president of China knows the U.S. won't act to punish China. Some American firms would be hurt if the U.S. did so, but every American firm that sources goods from China benefits from the low costs made possible by piracy.

Business-friendly policies have made China unbeatable.

DEMOCRACY AND PROSPERITY

Although it's common in the United States to criticize the authoritarian nature of China's government, investors and producers find it makes China more appealing than places where labor is abundant but apt to be politically active, religiously charged or prone to organize for higher wages. There is a strong strain of thought in the U.S. that says places that commit themselves to capitalism become more democratic and adopt the rule of law over time. Perhaps that's true in some cases, but it is hardly a law of nature. India has been one of the world's most robust democracies for more than half a century, but electoral politics long stood in the way of its economic development. Indonesia, which during the Suharto era preached economic development as the chief project of the nation—ahead of human rights—successfully found its way to democracy only when its economy collapsed in crisis.

THE CHINESE MODEL

Over Hu Jintao's years as paramount leader—during which China survived the world economic crisis, added trillions to its GDP and stretched its economic largesse to emerging nations and debt-burdened Europe and America—the government has become more restrictive of political dissent. The current Chinese leadership is stricter than it was five years ago. If China's economic partners were asked to state their true preferences, they would likely answer that, given the money they've poured into the country, they want China to remain "stable."

China has become a model for development for other countries, which see it as a viable alternative to a liberal democratic approach. Russia has turned away from freewheeling democracy and refashioned itself along the lines of China, with a strong one-party leadership that brooks no dissent. Venezuela under Hugo Chávez is another example.

Of course the U.S., with a quarter of China's population, remains the world's largest economy. Our per capita income is about $40,000 higher than China's, our manufacturing sector is still probably the world's biggest and our best technology is hard to beat. We create brands, pop entertainment and irresistibly edgy cultural products that entrance the world in ways China can now only dream about.

PATIENCE AND VICTORY

Mao had another philosophy that changed the fate of his country: his theory of revolutionary guerrilla warfare. When enemies advance, he preached, retreat and harass their outposts to exhaust them. When they are spent, attack them again; when they withdraw, chase. Above all be patient and victory will come. Hu did not attack on his state visit to America. On behalf of China he showed patience and confidence. As China's competitors, we are weary. Our weak economies offer us little to challenge China with but hollow rhetoric.

Ted C. Fishman is author of China Inc. and, most recently, Shock of Gray.

READER RESPONSE

BETTER WITH AGE

Susan Jacoby rails against describing the blue hairs among us with generalities ("The Folly of Age," February), but she seems to suffer from one herself—

Henry Kissinger, then and now.

she's grumpy. As an aging boomer, I find one of the few rewards of getting older is not jumping so quickly into errors in judgment. Using Henry Kissinger, of all people, as an example of someone who failed to accrue wisdom with age is lame. His refusal to atone for the blood on his hands is due to a lack of character, not a lack of wisdom.

Randy Schmidt
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Although age-related declines in cognition and memory are well documented, in some domains older adults outperform younger adults. For instance, Laura Carstensen at Stanford and colleagues have shown that older adults have superior socioemotional abilities. Lynn Hasher at the University of Toronto and others have suggested that increases in this and other reasoning competencies make up for declines in the speed of processing and memory. And our work, published last year in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* found that, regardless of their education, IQ or gender, older adults possess superior reasoning about societal and interpersonal conflicts. Each of these studies suggests we do well to seek the counsel of our elders.

Igor Grossmann
Michael Varnum
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Grossmann and Varnum are social psychologists at the University of Michigan.

DEFINE YOUR TERMS

The running debate in *Reader Response* about Hitler's political leanings cannot be constructive unless everyone agrees on what they mean by *liberal* and *conservative*. Historically, I think Hitler would be grouped with classical conservatives, who backed the idea of a strong and in many cases dictatorial central government such as a monarchy. As long as you were obedient, the government would take care of you. Those who subscribe to this line of thought today might be called "statists." China is to some extent run by a type of classical conservative government. But in the past century we have created new definitions, and now liberal progressives argue that government should regulate Happy Meals and gun ownership and intervene in the automobile and insurance industries. This is not done by the divine right of a king but for the "greater good."

Wilson Gulick
Aurora, Colorado

FIXING THE CONGO

The source of the problems Gérard Prunier depicts in "Hotel Congo" (February) lies not in the "darkness" of men's hearts. It's more prosaic but no less damning: a government unsuited to the challenges facing this vast African country. Huge distances and a threadbare infrastructure keep the Congo's diverse regions isolated and fearful of one another. With security forces either absent or predatory, violence and corruption are rampant. Meanwhile, rich natural resources offer powerful incentives for any group that can organize to exploit institutional weaknesses. The east is especially vulnerable because the government, headquartered 1,500 miles away, is almost nonexistent there. The only hope is a dramatic reorganization that empowers provincial governments

A 19th century map of the Congo.

and channels international support to them. Paradoxically, given that colonialists set the Congo on this bloody path, the key to recovery is multinational corporations. They are the best-managed institutions in the country and, subject to oversight, could help the Congolese gain control of their resources.

Seth Kaplan
New York, New York

Kaplan is author of Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development (sethkaplan.org).

PORN VS. PRAYER

A group called Atheist Agenda held an event at my university at which members traded pornography for Bibles, arguing both are smut and so can be bartered. Can you legally trade a PLAYBOY for a

The San Antonio atheists make their pitch.

Bible, or is that breaking some sort of redistribution clause?

Bryan De Leon
San Antonio, Texas

Once a person buys a copy of PLAYBOY *he or she is free to share it with others. And people do—we estimate each issue is read by an average of four people. Atheist Agenda has been holding its Smut for Smut exchange annually at the University of Texas at San Antonio since 2005 to elicit discussion and debate. But we worry that any person of faith who surrenders a holy book for "smut" will feel cheated being given an issue of* PLAYBOY.

In an effort to label Christian readers of PLAYBOY as hypocrites, a letter writer in February quotes Jesus as saying that anyone who looks at a woman with lust commits adultery. But twisting scripture is Satan's modus operandi. The word *adultery* indicates Jesus condemned only lusting after married women.

David Lentz
Pine City, Minnesota

A few Playmates have been married when they appeared in the magazine. We just didn't mention it. Now we may have to.

E-mail via the web at letters.playboy.com. Or write: 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

NEWSFRONT

A Crowded Field

Who was the first Republican to announce he or she would seek the party's 2012 nomination for president? It's not who you think. Bruce Gidner of Charlotte, Michigan declared his candidacy—in 2002. During every election cycle hundreds of native-born Americans declare their presidential aspirations, including every 2012 candidate at left. Who will play spoiler? Could it be Randy Crow, a "true American for true Americans"? David Larson, a director of the Bighorn–Desert View Water Agency? Dan Rozelle of the American Majority Party? Michael Levinson, author of *New World Hors d'Oeuvres*? White supremacist Billy Roper? Steven Neuenschwander, who promises better "boarder security"? Announcing your campaign for president is the easy part; a candidate hoping to get on the ballot in all 50 states will need to gather a total of about 700,000 signatures, says Richard Winger, editor of *Ballot Access News*. Or plan on getting 65 million write-in votes.

Burying Lenin

MOSCOW—A top member of the ruling United Russia party says it's time to bury Vladimir Lenin, whose mummified body has been under glass in Red Square since 1924. In a poll initiated by Vladimir Medinsky at goodbye lenin.ru, 69 percent of the respondents said it was time to honor Lenin's request to be buried beside his mother in St. Petersburg. The communists "wanted to create a substitute religion based on Lenin's cult, but they failed," Medinsky said. "It's time to finish with this."

Light Duty

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA—A woman filed a worker's compensation claim after a hotel light fixture hit her in the face while she was having sex on a business trip. The woman's lawyer argued she had been at the hotel at her employer's request. But the government countered that, unlike sleeping and bathing, coitus is not "incidental to work." If the woman wanted coverage, it said, she needed to inform her employer of her plans.

No Boarding

GENEVA—George W. Bush canceled a trip to Switzerland the day before human rights groups filed criminal complaints accusing him of torture for his authorization of waterboarding. The Center for Constitutional Rights released a legal template it says can be used to indict the former president if he travels to any of the 147 nations that have signed the UN Convention Against Torture. The group that invited the former president says the visit was scuttled for security reasons.

Help or Hinder

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA—The city council voted 4–3 to table a $50,000 plan to turn 14 public benches perpendicular to storefronts to discourage panhandlers. (The current setup is shown below.) Some residents argued the funds would be better spent helping the homeless get off the streets. To do just that in London, one charity tried a novel approach; it asked homeless people what they needed to change their lives and then gave it to them. Of the first 13 participants, 11 moved off the streets, at an average cost of $1,277 per person.

GRAPEVINE

DAVID BUCHAN/WIREIMAGE.COM

Little White Dress

Pantsuits are de rigueur for a court appearance; however, LINDSAY LOHAN arrived attired thusly for her arraignment. "Being a well-endowed girl, she couldn't help but look good," her *mother* said.

The Woman With the Yellow Hat

At the Grammy Awards, bi-curious LADY GAGA emerged from a translucent egg/pod/seed to perform her new single "Born This Way." We're not sure if the song refers to her propensity for the outrageous or to her excellent genes, but either way, we certainly approve of how she turned out.

GETTY IMAGES (2)

Bon Krupa

Unlike Victoria's Secret, Bon Prix does not airbrush out the good stuff—as demonstrated here by our two-time cover model JOANNA KRUPA.

Bewitching

British actress EMMA WATSON has come a long way since playing over-achieving witch-student Hermione Granger in the *Harry Potter* movies. And thanks to a recent slip of her top at an event in London, she's still casting spells on us. If only the boys at Hogwarts could see her now.

SPLASH NEWS

Lolli-Pop Star

Katy Perry isn't the only songbird who loves sugary confections. LEXI is a sassy 20-year-old who is fixing to take over the music world. We're already sweet on this pop tart, for obvious reasons.

©BAUER-GRIFFIN.COM

STEVE TORRES

The Woww Factor

What do Pamela Anderson and JENNI "JWoww" FARLEY have in common? They've both strolled the runway for designer Richie Rich. That's what you were thinking, right?

Our Funny Valentino

Meet FRANCESCA VALENTINO, an Italian model who enjoys trainspotting, listening to jazz, riding her Harley-Davidson Softail Deuce and taking long crawls on the beach.

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ROCKIN' MODEL: ELIZABETH SCARLETT JAGGER.

WHEN SHARKS GO CRAZY—TERROR IN THE RED SEA.

NEXT MONTH

LOUIS C.K. TALKS SHIRT SEX AND SARAH PALIN.

2011 PLAYBOY SEX POLL: WHAT WE'RE REALLY DOING.

ELIZABETH SCARLETT JAGGER—SHE'S HALF SUPERMODEL, HALF ROCK-AND-ROLL ROYALTY AND 100 PERCENT SMOKING HOT. THE SULTRY BEAUTY GIVES US SATISFACTION.

TERROR IN THE RED SEA—IN DECEMBER A STRING OF VIOLENT SHARK ATTACKS BLOODIED THE WATERS AT A POPULAR RESORT IN EGYPT. **STEPHAN TALTY** EXAMINES THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE BIZARRE ONSLAUGHT. IT'S SHARK WEEK ON STEROIDS.

JOHN DALY'S DIRTY JOKES—AFTER SEVERAL STINTS IN REHAB, FOUR DIVORCES, NUMEROUS SCANDALS AND LAP-BAND SURGERY, GOLF'S NUMBER ONE BAD BOY HAS FINALLY GROWN UP—OR HAS HE? **ALISON BONAGURO** FINDS OUT.

WEIRD TALES—BOOKER PRIZE WINNER **MARGARET ATWOOD** KNOWS WHAT'S WEIRD. THAT'S WHY SHE LOVES THE PROVOCATIVE COVER ART OF AMERICA'S FAMOUS PULP MAGAZINE.

THE NEW CONGRESSMAN'S GUIDE TO GETTING LAID IN D.C.—RULE NUMBER ONE: DON'T SEND SHIRTLESS PHOTOS OF YOURSELF TO A WOMAN YOU JUST MET ON CRAIGSLIST. REAL ADVICE FOR POLITICAL PLAYERS ON THE PROWL.

LOUIS C.K.—IN *20Q* THE FUNNYMAN TALKS TO **JASON BUHRMESTER** ABOUT WORKING FOR CONAN, HIS DRUNKEN TWITTER RANTS AND WHY HE LOVES BIG JUGS OF COLD MILK.

PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR—FANS VOTED, HEF LISTENED. FIND OUT WHICH 2010 CENTERFOLD STOOD OUT FROM ALL THE REST.

2011 PLAYBOY SEX POLL—HAVE YOU EVER HAD SEX WITH TWO PEOPLE ON THE SAME DAY? TAKEN EROTIC PHOTOS WITH YOUR PHONE? WE ASKED 2,309 ADULTS TO SHARE THEIR SECRETS. SEE HOW YOUR COITAL REALITY COMPARES.

CHEF ENGLISH MAJOR—IT TOOK HIM 50 YEARS TO BECOME A DECENT COOK. *LEGENDS OF THE FALL* AUTHOR **JIM HARRISON** DESCRIBES HIS LONG JOURNEY TO CULINARY COMPETENCE.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL—MSNBC'S LIBERAL FIREBRAND AND LONGTIME WASHINGTON INSIDER GIVES **DAVID SHEFF** THE LAST WORD IN AN OUTSPOKEN *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW.*

THE GIRL NEXT DOOR—IN NEW FICTION BY **ROBERT COOVER** THE BOY NEXT DOOR MARRIES THE GIRL NEXT DOOR, AND KINKY SEX, HORSE-RIDING INJURIES AND POISON DARTS ENSUE.

GOING MOBILE—THESE DAYS IT'S ALL ABOUT DOING THINGS ON THE GO. FROM TABLETS TO PHONES TO LAPTOPS, WE GIVE YOU THE LOWDOWN ON MUST-HAVE PORTABLE GADGETS.

PLUS—STYLISH BOARD SHORTS, A ROUNDUP OF **ROBERT "BUCK" BROWN**'S *GRANNY* CARTOONS AND MISS JUNE **MEI-LING LAM.**

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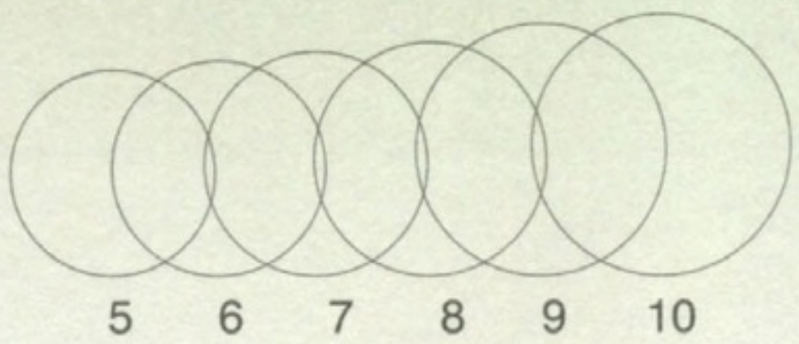

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